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BY

FRANZ PFEIFFER

LEIPZIG, 1857

TRANSLATION

WITH SOME OMISSIONS AND ADDITIONS

BY

C. DE B. EVANS

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PREFACE

THE impossibility of completing my edition of *Meister Eckhart* as quickly as it has been at various times desired and as I should myself have liked to do, as well as the wish no longer to withhold from scholars the writings of one of the deepest thinkers of all time, has decided me to publish in the meantime the portion contained in the text. The second part, with literary-historical introduction, notes, glossary, and various additions and appendices, will follow as soon as I can spare the time from my new duties.

This first instalment contains, with the exception of a few short pieces which I obtained only after it was printed, everything of Eckhart's which, during eighteen years of tireless research, I have been able to collect out of manuscripts and printed books. It is little enough compared with the works of Eckhart still known to Trithemius and of which he gives quite a long catalogue in his book *De Scriptoribus Eccles.* (s. Fabricii bibliotheca eccles. Hamburgh, 1718, fol. pag. 130); but on the other hand what I offer here is at least three times the amount of what has hitherto been known, and the teaching, the philosophic system of this remarkable man can now be presented in a more definite and complete form than it was possible to do from the scanty and untrustworthy data possessed before.

In order to give an account of the means within my reach and at the same time to give the reader some idea of the extent and difficulty of my work, I append a list of the printed matter and manuscripts used, together with a statement of their contents arranged and numbered to correspond with my edition.

I. PARCHMENT MSS.

1. A. Strassburg, stadtbibliothek, A. 98. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 16, 17, 26–28, 30–39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 50–53; II, 6.)
2. B. Basel, universitätsbibliothek, B. XI, 10. 14th cent. 12mo. (I. 17–25; III, 6, 7; IV.)

3. c. Einsiedeln, klosterbibliothek, No. 277. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 29, 40, 45, 49, 56, 59, 60, 88–90; II, 2, 11–14, 16; III, 21; IV.)
4. d. Berlin, k. bibliothek, cod. germ. 8, No. 12. 14th cent. (I, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 37, 101; III, 49–65. IV.)
5. e. Berlin, k. bibliothek, cod. germ. 8, No. 65. 14th cent. (I, 6, 10, 12, 14, 19, 34, 51, 76 (*a*); III, 1.)
6. f. Stuttgart, k. öffentl. bibliothek, brev. 4, No. 88. 14th cent. (I, 1–5, 7, 8, 15, 55; II, 6; III, 2, 70.)
7. g. Einsiedeln, klosterbibliothek, No. 278. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 5, 11, 13, 15–18, 25, 42, 43, 51, 54, 57, 58, 73, 92, 93, 95, 99; III, 11, 12, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30; IV.)
8. h. München, k. hof- und staatsbibliothek, cod. germ. 133. 14th cent. 12mo. (I, 45, 76 (*a*), 103; II, 6, 12; IV.)
9. i. Kloster-Neuburg bei Wien, No. 1141. 14th cent. 8vo. (I, 30, 33–35, 39, 72, 97, 98, 100; II, 2, 7, 10, 11, 13–16.)
10. k. Wien, hofbibliothek, No. 2728. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 67, 68; II, 2.)
11. l. Same, No. 2739. 14th cent. 4to. (II, 1.)
12. m. Basel, universitätsbibliothek, B. IX, 15. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 57, 61, 66, 71, 98; II, 5; III, 10–16.)
13. n. Frankfurt, stadtbibliothek (old Dominican library), No. 167. 14th cent. 8vo. (II, 14, 15.)
14. o. Karlsruhe, grossherzogliche bibliothek, cod. s. Petri, No. 85. 14th cent. 4to. (I, 8, 51, 70, 84; II, 12; III, 3, 15, 22, 25, 29.)
15. p. Giessen (in private ownership) from the kloster Altenburg bei Wetzlar. 14th cent. (III, 31–48.)
16. q. Wien, hofbibliothek, No. 2757. 14th cent. 4to. (III, 4, 5.)

II. PAPER MSS.

17. *a.* München, k. hof- und staatsbibliothek, cod. germ. 365. 15th cent. (I, 6, 7, 13, 14, 47, 55, 57–59, 63–66, 71; II, 7; III, 66.)
18. *b.* Stuttgart, k. privatbibliothek, No. 1, 26 (old numbering). 15th cent. 4to. (I, 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 45, 54, 57, 61, 62; II, 2.)
19. *c.* Berlin, k. bibliothek, cod. germ. 4, 125. 14th cent. (I, 6, 14.)
20. *d.* Basle, Adam Petri's edition of Tauler's sermons, 1521

and 1522. Fol. (I, 6–8, 10–14, 17–23, 25, 34, 36, 37, 40–43, 45, 56–60, 65, 73–92, 98, 101, 102; III, 1, 15, 21, 66.)

21. *e.* Berlin, k. bibliothek, cod. germ. 4, 191, 14th–15th cent. (I, 8, 15; II, 11, 12; III, 23, 24; IV.)
22. *f.* Melk, klosterbibliothek, L. 5. 15th cent. Fol. (I, 7, 76 (*b*), 105-110; II, 2, 11.)
23. *g.* Same, L. 27. 15th cent. 12mo. (II, 2, 3.)
24. *h.* Coblenz, gymnasiums bibliothek, No. 43. 15th cent. 4to. (I, 15, 57; II, 9; III, 8.)
25. *i.* Stuttgart, own possession. 15th cent. 4to. (I, 9, 40, 57.)
26. *k.* Cologne, Jaspar von Gennep's edition of Tauler's sermons, 1543. Fol. (I, 69; II, 1; III, 70.)
27. *l.* Leipzig, Cunrad Kachelouen's edition of Tauler's sermons, 1498. 4to. (I, 1–4.)
28. *m.* Breslau, in possession of Cond. Prince-Bishop Melchior v. Diepenbrock. 15th cent. Fol. Tractate on *Active and Potential Intellect.*
29. *n.* Stuttgart, k. öffentliche bibliothek, cod. theol. fol. No. 155. 15th cent. (II, 4, 18.)
30. *o.* Same, cod. theol. fol. No. 283. 15th cent. (III, 69.)
31. *p.* Same, cod. theol. 8, No. 18. 15th cent. (II, 8, 11, 14, 15; III, 9, 67.)
32. *q.* Colmar. 15th cent. (III, 1.)
33. *r.* München, k. hof- und staatsbibliothek, cod. germ. 116. 15th cent. 8vo. (III, 17–19, 68.)
34–38. s^{a-e}. Same, cod. germ. 388, 411. 15th cent. 4to.—447, 463. 15th cent. 8vo.—783. 15th cent. (III, 70.)
39. *t.* Stuttgart, k. öffentliche bibliothek, cod. theol. 8, No. 13. 14th cent. (I, 40; II, 9; III, 13.)
40. *u.* Schaffhausen, stadtbibliothek. 15th cent. 4to. (I, 104.)
41. *v.* Stuttgart, k. öffentliche bibliothek, cod. theol. fol. 33, v. j. 1426. (II, 7.)
42. *w.* Frankfurt, stadtbibliothek, No. 3500 (old Dominican library). 15th cent. 8vo. (II, 17.)
43–44 x^{ab}. München, hof- und staatsbibliothek, cod. germ. 218 and 4482. 15th cent. 4to. (II, 17.)
45. *y.* Stuttgart, k. öffentliche bibliothek, cod. theol. 4to. No. 50. 15th cent. (III, 67.)

In addition I have to note a MS. with forty sermons by Eckhart, paper, of the date 1440, in the possession of Prof. Karl Schmidt of Strassburg. Unfortunately this has remained inaccessible to me,

I only know what the possessor has disclosed in his French monograph on Eckhart (*Mémoires de l'académie franc. mor. et polit. par savants étrangers.* Paris, 1847. T. 2).

With regard to the internal arrangement and ordering of my material I make the following observations. The broad division into Sermons, Tractates, Sayings was obvious. On the other hand it was difficult to decide what sequence the sermons ought to follow. An arrangement which showed the changes in Eckhart's teaching in a logical manner was out of the question, and the same applies to putting them in order of age or time of delivery; the data for this are wholly lacking. It is quite exceptional for Eckhart to make any reference to a previous sermon. Among the earliest of these sermons, belonging perhaps to the period of his Vicar-Generalship in Bohemia (about 1307), I reckon those numbered 105–110 from the Melk MS., L. 5. (No. 22.) In the superscription of these Eckhart is so called instead of Meister Eckhart, a designation which points to the time when the memory of his final years of study in Paris was still lively. These I have placed last, simply on the grounds that, like all the MSS. obtained from Austria, they seem to be much edited; superficially, in diction, they certainly are and I think too their matter has been tampered with. As being the simplest arrangement, the liturgical order of the Gospels commended itself but here great difficulties were encountered the sermons being prefaced by texts chosen quite at random and as a rule all reference to the Sunday or festival is wanting. The titles of the old Basle edition are for the most part arbitrary.

I decided therefore to rely solely on my sources and the order in which their individual sermons were presented. With this end in view those manuscripts were chosen out which were specially distinguished for their age or authenticity, and from these again selection was made of those with superscriptions imputing them to Eckhart. In this way and in this way only I found it possible to enter into the genius and the method and the idiosyncrasy of Eckhart and gain a reliable standard whereby to determine those sermons which, though found among the authentic ones, were yet without his name. By this means I hope to have acquired the necessary practice and familiarity with Eckhart's writings and I believe I need not fear that any important item of my collection will ultimately prove to be wrongly attributed to Eckhart.

The Sayings, with few exceptions, bear all the marks of authenticity and need no further verification. Only a couple of them are traceable to the complete sermons and tractates included, though most are fragments and portions of larger works. From this we can form some notion of the amount of Eckhart still lost to us.

With regard to the fourth section, which I have called *Liber Positionum*, I had no external evidence of Eckhart's authorship, but Eckhart's genius and characteristic outlook seem to me to be unmistakably shown in these arguments in which, in the form of dialogues between master and pupil, a series of weighty philosophical and theological questions are ventilated. Further, the separate items of this work which only loosely hang together, I have met with only among Eckhart's writings. The title I have borrowed from Trithemius' Catalogue (see above); it might have been made for it.

Obviously my text is not all of equal value and correctness; who could expect it? With the numerous pieces preserved only in late and bad MSS. it was often impossible owing to the carelessness of the scribe to unravel the manifold confusion of thought and connection; how was I to restore and supply words and whole sentences which had been omitted? I mean to comment in the Notes on the passages which seem to me to be corrupt and give the emendations and conjectures which I have found it inexpedient to publish with the text. Of another kind but no less great was my difficulty with those passages which certainly appeared in the best MSS. but showed considerable variations among themselves. How important these discrepancies often are the variants will show. In cases of this sort the recognition and isolation of the authentic from the unauthentic later additions or distortions is rarely to be done with any certainty and for that reason I have sometimes adopted the expedient of putting the variants themselves in juxtaposition in the text.[1]

As to the diction of the contents of this volume, which I have neither wished nor been able to give much order to, I have followed the oldest and best MSS. which, consistently with Eckhart's home and birthplace, Strassburg, are written almost entirely in the Alemanic idiom: Middle German and the speech of Cologne do appear occasionally but notwithstanding Eckhart's long sojourn on the lower Rhine, only rarely and in late MSS.

STUTTGART, *5th July* 1857.

The last two pages of Pfeiffer's Preface are occupied with acknowledgments of the help and kindness received from professors, librarians, keepers of archives, etc. Among these appear the names of Wackernagel, P. Gall-Morel, Franz Hoffmann, and the Cardinal Prince-Bishop of Breslau, Melchior von Diepenbrock,

[1] Many examples of this occur. See especially I, lxxvi and II, xi.

' who never tired of lending me a helping hand.' He is especially grateful to the then Prefect of the Vatican Archives who enabled him to trace and placed at his disposal eight documents (s. Pertz. archiv 9, 449) relating to Eckhart and of much importance ' as showing the relations of Eckhart with the Church, his position with regard to the Archbishop of Cologne and the justification of the latter for setting in motion the Inquisition against him, as well as for the history of the powerful spiritual movement which at the beginning of the fourteenth century took place on the Rhine.' All these documents he reserves for his projected volume of Notes, with the exception of one short quotation from Eckhart's Declaration at Cologne, 13 Feb. 1327. This, together with other relevant documents, was afterwards published by Preger at the end of the first volume of his *Geschichte der deutschen Mystik.*

Eckhart [1] (d. *cir.* 1327) has been called the father of the German mystics,[2] the philosophical creative genius of the German mystics [3] and the father of German speculation.[4] According to Dean Inge he is 'next to Plotinus the greatest philosopher-mystic' [5] and the most Plotinian of all Christian philosophers.[6] He was a learned [7] member of the Dominican or Preaching Order and sometime *lector biblicus* at the University of Paris, then the Dominican College of St Jacob where he was given his title of Meister by Pope Boniface VIII. But it was probably at Cologne that he graduated in the Scholasticism of Albertus Magnus (1205–1281) and Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274) whose system was at that time rapidly acquiring its hold. He held at different times important provincial posts and proved himself an able administrator and reformer of the numerous religious houses in his care but it was principally at Strassburg and afterwards at Cologne that he established his great influence as a teacher and 'for an entire generation, with the boldest freedom, preached to the multitudes in the German tongue on topics bristling with difficulties for the orthodox faith.' [8] For he had conceived the then novel idea of instructing the laity and the many semi-religious communities and brotherhoods of that date—Beguines, Beghards, Friends of God (*Gottesfreunde*), etc.—no less than the religious of his Order, and for this purpose it was necessary to make the further innovation of using the vulgar tongue instead of Latin, the teaching medium of that day. His success in expounding the abstruse tenets of the Scholastic philosophy in an undeveloped language which he had to supply with words and fashion to his needs, has earned for Eckhart the titles of father of the German language and the father of German philosophic [9] prose. Ultimately the Church authorities became alarmed at the enthusiasm roused by his teaching and especially at its effect upon the laity. He was accused of preaching to the people in their own language

[1] The following facts are taken chiefly from Preger's *Geschichte* and Lasson's *Meister Eckhart*. (See Bibliography for full titles.)

[2] Bach, p. 1.

[3] Wackernagel, p. 298.

[4] Bach.

[5] *Light, Life and Love*, p. xv.

[6] *Philosophy of Plotinus*, vol. ii, p. 107.

[7] Tauler (1300–1361) describes him as 'a man of prodigious learning, too profoundly versed in the subtilties of God- and nature-wisdom for many of the scholars of his day rightly to understand him' (*Sermons*, Basle ed., 1521).

[8] Rufus M. Jones, p. 218.

[9] Lasson, pp. 66, 69.

things that might lead to heresy [1] and this led to his excommunication in 1329, after his death, on the general grounds of preaching to the laity the secrets of the Church, a list of seventeen specific heretical and eleven objectional doctrines being appended to the inditement.[2] To the first accusation he replied : 'If the ignorant are not taught they will never learn'; 'the business of the doctor is to heal.' The charge of heresy he strenuously denied and largely succeeded in rebutting while he lived. 'I protest in the presence of God,' he says, 'that I have always avoided with horror all error in matters of faith,' and he never made any recantation of his teaching although he publicly declared his willingness to retract any error 'that might be proved against him.'[3] His 'errors' appear to be the logical outcome of the system he taught. As Lasson says, 'He taught what Dionysius and St Thomas taught . . . but he goes further than any of his predecessors and crosses the boundaries of Church dogma.'

There is only the scantiest material for a biography of Eckhart. Of his birth neither date nor place is known. It is argued that he was born before 1260 either at Strassburg in Saxony, or at Hochheim in Thüringia. The first known mention of his name is in a list of Professors at the University of Paris : *fr. Echardus, Tutonicus, licentiatus per Bonifacium*, 1302. In 1303 he was Provincial of the Order in Saxony, with its sixty convents, men's and women's. To this title he added in 1307 that of Vicar-General of Bohemia where he reformed the religious houses. In 1311 he returned to Paris University and in 1312 began his long sojourn as head of the Order at Strassburg. Eight years later (1320) he is Prior of Frankfurt. There is now some suspicion of his orthodoxy but the Order still supports him and he is given a Chair at the Dominican College in Cologne where he enhances his reputation as a preacher. Here Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck probably heard him, and Tauler also at Strassburg. In 1325–6, suspicion of his teaching having revived, Nikolaus of Strassburg was appointed his special Inquisitor and his case came before the Inquisition in Venice. He delivered his Protest before that body on 24 Jan. 1327, and on 13 Feb. following made his public Declaration of orthodoxy in the Dominican Church at Cologne. This is the last date on which he is known to have been alive. The answer of the Inquisition to his appellation, refusing to accept it, is dated 22 Feb. 1327, and it is conjectured that he died soon after. He was excommunicated by the Bull of John XXII, 27 March 1329.

[1] Inquisition at Venice, 1325.
[2] Bull of John XXII. See Preger, Appendix.
[3] Declaration at Cologne, 13 Feb. 1327.

After his excommunication in 1329 Eckhart gradually lost all but legendary fame and his writings survived mostly under other names. Five hundred years later, in 1829, Gorres speaks of him as 'une figure chrétienne presque mythique.'[1] But for at least two generations after his death his writings, secretly passed from hand to hand and frequently transcribed, formed what Lasson calls 'the text-books of God-intoxicated piety.' To the preachers of his school, John Tauler (1300–1361), Suso (1300–1365), Ruysbroeck (1293–1381), all members of the Brotherhood of the Friends of God, and to others of less note, they were a veritable mine from which they drew not only inspiration but words, sayings, whole passages and even whole sermons. To the Basle 1521 edition of Tauler's sermons Adam Petri had appended a few pages of sermons under Eckhart's own name and this led to his rediscovery by Schmidt in 1847.[2] Tauler's sermons were afterwards shown by Pfeiffer to be a valuable source of Eckhart's writings and this applies also to the works of Suso and Ruysbroeck to a less degree.

Pfeiffer's collection of Eckhart's works is the earliest and still by far the largest. He confined himself principally to writings in Alemanic, the High German dialect of Strassburg at that date, but there are a number of others in different dialects of German, a few in Latin,[3] and some in a mixture of the two.[4] There are often numerous variants of the same original, sometimes under Eckhart's name but often attributed to others, *e.g.* Franke von Köln, Hermann von Fritslar, Nikolaus von Landau, Johannes von Sterngassen, Kraft von Royberg, all belonging to the fourteenth century. The names of David of Ausburg and Nikolaus of Strassburg might possibly be added but, as Pfeiffer points out, frequently the only test of authorship is the internal evidence of style and matter and this test has yet to be conclusively applied. A few of Pfeiffer's attributions would seem to have been wrongly made and in some cases overworking has robbed the writing of its Eckhartian flavour. In the following translation the six last and doubtful sermons have been omitted and a few other numbers of Parts I and II have been replaced by substitutes, either discoveries of Pfeiffer's or from independent sources.

With regard to the authorship of these substitutes, I, lviii, II, xvii and xix, are attributed to Eckhart on the authority of Preger (see *Geschichte*, pp. 318–324); I, xii on that of Büttner (see *M. Eckhart's Schriften, etc.*, vol. ii, p. 228). Tractate i (from the Jostes collection) is evidently by the same hand as II, xix and

[1] Works of Suso, 1829. Quoted by Jundt.
[2] Martensen had already published his Monograph in 1842.
[3] Denifle. Also Spamer's *Texte*. [4] Spamer's *Texte* and Jostes.

I, xliii by the same author as I, lxxii. Sermon xlvi is found (see Jostes, No. 34) forming part of Pfeiffer's Tractate iv. Of the other substitutes, I, ix is a typical Eckhart fragment from Hermann von Fritslar's *Das Heiligenleben* (1349), a collection which must now be recognised as a source of Eckhart's writings (see also II, viii). Lastly, I, x and xv (from Spamer's *Texte*) appear to be compilations from Eckhart's works. This applies also to Greith's *Second Book* [1] from which I, lxxxix is taken.

NOTE ON SCHOLASTICISM

The Scholastic movement originated in the schools founded by Charlemagne (742–814). It aimed at reconciling the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists [2] (Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus) with the doctrines of Christianity. The first and greatest period of Scholasticism, which culminated with Aquinas (d. 1274) and his *Summa Theologica* began with Scotus Erigena (d. *cir.* 877) who translated into Latin the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius (sixth century) and in reviving his system popularised also the philosophy of Aristotle as known chiefly in the Latin translations of his works and of Porphyry's which had been made by Boëthius (d. 542). The tradition of Aristotle had also been handed down through the great Arabian Aristotelians represented later by Avicenna (d. 1037) and Averroes (d. 1193) the Latin translations of whose commentaries Aquinas appears to have used. Through the same Mohammedan school came the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, really the *Enneads* (iv–vi) of Plotinus. Finally, Proclus exerted a profound influence on the Scholastic philosophy not only through the medium of Dionysius' writings but also directly through his own, for it was his *Elements* which, emanating from the Arabians under the name of the *Liber de Causis*, famous in the middle ages, was a favourite text-book in their schools.[3]

[1] Greith attributes to Suso, by a process of exclusion, the untitled work which forms his *Second Book*. (See *Die deutsche Mystik*, pp. 81 and 96.) The original of this is an early fifteenth-century MS. of 342 small 4to pages from a Dominican Convent at St Gall, and reference to the various Eckhart collections shows it to be a 'Teaching System' mainly, if not wholly, compiled from his writings.

[2] Eckhart's 'New Philosophers'? 'The Philosopher' is Aristotle. Aquinas is called 'The Doctor,' and 'a heathen doctor' is often, but by no means always, Averroes.

[3] See *History of the Later Roman Empire*, J. B. Bury; Macmillan, 1923. *Avicenne*, Carra de Vaux; Paris, 1900. *The Metaphysical Elements of Proclus*, Thos. M. Johnson; Missouri, U.S.A., 1909.

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1857. Pfeiffer (Franz), Deutsche Mystiker, etc., Bd. ii. Meister Eckhart. Leipzig.

1861. Greith (E.), Die deutsche Mystik im Prediger-Orden (von 1250–1380). Friburg.

1864. Bach (Joseph), Meister Eckhart der Vater des deutschen Speculation. Wien.

1868. Lasson (A.), Meister Eckhart der Mystiker. Berlin. (Monograph with Emendations to Pfeiffer's text, for which see also Zt. f. dt. Phil., 1878.)

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[1] *Collazie*, Lat. *collotio*, sometimes translated table-talk (see Wackernagel). The discourses read aloud in monasteries during meal-times were called collations, hence the use of the word collation for the meal itself.

[2] Title as in Pfeiffer's text.

[3] From other sources than Pfeiffer's *Meister Eckhart*.

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I

SERMONS AND COLLATIONS

Someone complained to Meister Eckhart that no one could understand his sermons. He said, To understand my sermons a man requires three things. He must have conquered strife and be in contemplation of his highest good and be satisfied to do God's bidding and be a beginner with beginners and naught himself and be so master of himself as to be incapable of anger.

Cod. Monac. Germ., 365, Fol. 192*b*.

I

THIS IS MEISTER ECKHART FROM WHOM GOD NOTHING HID

Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet etc. (*Sap.* 18_{14}). 'For while all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, etc.' Here in time we make holiday because the eternal birth which God the Father bore and bears unceasingly in eternity is now born in time, in human nature. St Augustine says this birth is always happening. But if it happen not in me what does it profit me? What matters is that it shall happen in me.

We intend therefore to speak of this birth as taking place in us: as being consummated in the virtuous soul; for it is in the perfect soul that God speaks his Word. What I shall say is true only of the perfected man, of him who has walked and is still walking in the way of God; not of the natural undisciplined man who is entirely remote from and unconscious of this birth.

There is a saying of the wise man: 'When all things lay in the midst of silence then leapt there down into me from on high, from the royal throne, a secret word.' This sermon is about this word.

Concerning it three things are to be noted. The first is, whereabouts in the soul God the Father speaks his Word, where she is receptive of this act, where this birth befalls. It is bound to be in the purest, loftiest, subtlest part of the soul. Verily, an God the Father in his omnipotence had endowed the soul with a still nobler nature, had she received from him anything yet more exalted, then must the Father have delayed this birth for the presence of this greater excellence. The soul in which this birth shall come to pass must be absolutely pure and must live in gentle fashion, quite peaceful and wholly introverted: not running out through the five senses into the manifoldness of creatures, but altogether within and harmonised in her summit. That is its place. Anything inferior is disdained by it.

The second part of this discourse has to do with man's conduct

in relation to this act, this interior speaking, this birth : whether it is more profitable to co-operate in it—perhaps by creating in the mind an imaginary image and disciplining oneself thereon by reflecting that God is wise, omnipotent, eternal, or whatever else one is able to excogitate about God—so that the birth may come to pass in us through our own exertion and merit ; or whether it is more profitable and conducive to this birth from the Father to shun all thoughts, words and deeds as well as all mental images and empty oneself, maintaining a wholly God-receptive attitude, such that one's own self is idle letting God work. Which conduct subserves this birth best ?

The third point is the profit and how great it is, which accrues from this birth.

Note in the first place that in what I am about to say I intend to avail myself of natural proofs that ye yourselves can grasp, for though I put more faith in the scriptures than myself, nevertheless it is easier and better for you to learn by means of arguments that can be verified.

First we will take the words : ' In the midst of the silence there was spoken in me a secret word.'

—But, Sir, where is the silence and where the place in which the word is spoken ?

As I said just now, it is in the purest part of the soul, in the noblest, in her ground, aye in the very essence of the soul. That is mid-silence for thereinto no creature did ever get, nor any image, nor has the soul there either activity or understanding, therefore she is not aware of any image either of herself or any creature. Whatever the soul effects she effects with her powers. When she understands she understands with her intellect. When she remembers she does so with her memory. When she loves she does so with her will. She works then with her powers and not with her essence. Now every exterior act is linked with some means. The power of seeing is brought into play only through the eyes ; elsewhere she can neither do nor bestow such a thing as seeing. And so with all the other senses : their operations are always effected through some means or other. But there is no activity in the essence of the soul ; the faculties she works with emanate from the ground of the essence but in her actual ground there is mid-stillness ; here alone is rest and a habitation for this birth, this act, wherein God the Father speaks his Word, for it is intrinsically receptive of naught save the divine essence, without means. Here God enters the soul with his all, not merely with a part. God enters the ground of the soul. None can touch the ground of the soul but God only. No creature is admitted into her ground, it must stop outside in her powers. There it sees the image whereby it has been

drawn in and found shelter. For when the soul-powers contact a creature they set to to make of the creature an image and likeness which they absorb. By it they know the creature. Creatures cannot go into the soul, nor can the soul know anything about a creature which she has not willingly taken the image of into herself. She approaches creatures through their present images ; an image being a thing that the soul creates with her powers. Be it a stone, a rose, a man, or anything else that she wants to know about, she gets out the image of it which she has already taken in and is thus enabled to unite herself with it. But an image received in this way must of necessity enter from without through the senses. Consequently there is nothing so unknown to the soul as herself. The soul, says a philosopher, can neither create nor absorb an image of herself. So she has nothing to know herself by. Images all enter through the senses, hence she can have no image of herself. She knows other things but not herself. Of nothing does she know so little as of herself, owing to this arrangement. Now thou must know that inwardly the soul is free from means and images, that is why God can freely unite with her without form or similitude. Thou canst not but attribute to God without measure whatever power thou dost attribute to a master. The wiser and more powerful the master the more immediately is his work effected and the simpler it is. Man requires many instruments for his external works ; much preparation is needed ere he can bring them forth as he has imagined them. The sun and moon whose work is to give light, in their mastership perform this very swiftly : the instant their radiance is poured forth, all the ends of the world are full of light. More exalted are the angels, who need less means for their works and have fewer images. The highest Seraph has but a single image. He seizes as a unity all that his inferiors regard as manifold. Now God needs no image and has no image : without image, likeness or means does God work in the soul, aye, in her ground whereinto no image did ever get but only himself with his own essence. This no creature can do.

—How does God the Father give birth to his Son in the soul : like creatures, in image and likeness ?

No, by my faith ! but just as he gives him birth in eternity and no otherwise.

—Well, but how does he give him birth there ?

See. God the Father has perfect insight into himself, profound and thorough knowledge of himself by means of himself, not by means of any image. And thus God the Father gives birth to his Son, in the very oneness of the divine nature. Mark, thus it is and in no other way that God the Father gives birth to his Son in the ground and essence of the soul and thus he unites himself

with her. Were any image present there would not be real union and in real union lies thy whole beatitude.

Now haply thou wilt say : ' But there is nothing innate in the soul save images.' No, not so ! If that were true the soul would never be happy, for God cannot make any creature wherein thou canst enjoy perfect happiness, else were God not the highest happiness and final goal, whereas it is his will and nature to be the alpha and omega of all. No creature can be happiness. And here indeed can just as little be perfection, for perfection (perfect virtue that is to say) results from perfection of life. Therefore verily thou must sojourn and dwell in thy essence, in thy ground, and there God shall mix thee with his simple essence without the medium of any image. No image represents and signifies itself : it stands for that of which it is the image. Now seeing that thou hast no image save of what is outside thee, therefore it is impossible for thee to be beatified by any image whatsoever.

The second point is, what it does behove a man to do in order to deserve and procure this birth to come to pass and be consummated in him : is it better for him to do his part towards it, to imagine and think about God, or should he keep still in peace and quiet so that God can speak and act in him while he merely waits on God's operation ? At the same time I repeat that this speaking, this act, is only for the good and perfect, those who have so absorbed and assimilated the essence of virtue that it emanates from them naturally, without their seeking ; and above all there must live in them the worthy life and lofty teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such are permitted to know that the very best and utmost of attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee. When the powers have all been withdrawn from their bodily forms and functions, then this Word is spoken. Thus he says : ' in the midst of the silence the secret word was spoken to me.' The more completely thou art able to in-draw thy faculties and forget those things and their images which thou has taken in, the more, that is to say, thou forgettest the creature, the nearer thou art to this and the more susceptible thou art to it. If only thou couldst suddenly be altogether unaware of things, aye, couldst thou but pass into oblivion of thine own existence as St Paul did when he said : ' Whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not, God knoweth ! ' Here the spirit had so entirely absorbed the faculties that it had forgotten the body : memory no longer functioned, nor understanding, nor the senses, nor even those powers whose duty it is to govern and grace the body ; vital warmth and energy were arrested so that the body failed not throughout the three days during which he neither ate nor drank. Even so fared Moses when he fasted forty days on the mount and

was none the worse for it: on the last day he was as strong as on the first. Thus a man must abscond from his senses, invert his faculties and lapse into oblivion of things and of himself. Anent which a philosopher apostrophised the soul: 'Withdraw from the restlessness of external activities!' And again: 'Flee away and hide thee from the turmoil of outward occupations and inward thoughts for they create nothing but discord!' If God is to speak his Word in the soul she must be at rest and at peace; then he speaks in the soul his Word and himself: not an image but himself. Dionysius says: 'God has no image nor likeness of himself seeing that he is intrinsically all good, truth and being.' God performs all his works, in himself and outside himself, simultaneously. Do not fondly imagine that God, when he created the heavens and the earth and all creatures, made one thing one day and another the next. Moses describes it thus it is true, nevertheless he knew better: he did so merely on account of those who are incapable of understanding or conceiving otherwise. All God did was: he willed and they were. God works without instrument and without image. And the freer thou art from images the more receptive thou art to his interior operation; and the more introverted and oblivious thou art the nigher thou art thereto. Dionysius exhorted his disciple Timothy in this sense saying: 'Dear son Timothy, do thou with untroubled mind swing thyself up above thyself and above thy powers, above all modes and all existences, into the secret, still darkness, that thou mayest attain to the knowledge of the unknown super-divine God.' All things must be forsaken. God scorns to work among images.

Now haply thou wilt say: 'What is it that God does without images in the ground and essence?' That I am incapable of knowing, for my soul-powers can receive only in images; they have to recognise and lay hold of each thing in its appropriate image: they cannot recognise a bird in the image of a man. Now since images all enter from without, this is concealed from my soul, which is most salutary for her. Not-knowing makes her wonder and leads her to eager pursuit, for she knows clearly *that* it is but knows not *how* nor *what* it is. No sooner does a man know the reason of a thing than immediately he tires of it and goes casting about for something new. Always clamouring to know, he is ever inconstant. The soul is constant only to this unknowing knowing which keeps her pursuing.

The wise man said concerning this: 'In the middle of the night when all things were in quiet silence there was spoken to me a hidden word.' It came like a thief, by stealth. What does he mean by a word that was hidden? The nature of a word is to reveal what is hidden. It appeared before me, shining out with

intent to reveal and giving me knowledge of God. Hence it is called a word. But what it was remained hidden from me. That was its stealthy coming 'in a whispering stillness to reveal itself.' It is just because it is hidden that one is and must be always after it. It appears and disappears: we are meant to yearn and sigh for it.

St Paul says we ought to pursue this until we espy it and not stop until we grasp it. When he returned after having been caught up into the third heaven where God was made known to him and where he beheld all things, he had forgotten nothing, but it was so deep down in his ground that his intellect could not reach it: it was veiled from him. He was therefore obliged to pursue it and search for it in himself, not outside himself. It is not outside, it is inside: wholly within. And being convinced of this he said, 'I am sure that neither death nor any affliction can separate me from what I find within me.'

There is a fine saying of one heathen philosopher to another about this, he says: 'I am aware of something in me which sparkles in my intelligence; I clearly perceive that it is somewhat but *what* I cannot grasp. Yet methinks if I could only seize it I should know all truth.' To which the other philosopher replied: 'Follow it boldly! for if thou canst seize it thou wilt possess the sum-total of all good and have eternal life!' St Augustine expresses himself in the same sense: 'I am conscious of something within me that plays before my soul and is as a light dancing in front of it; were this brought to steadiness and perfection in me it would surely be eternal life!' It hides yet it shows. It comes, but after the manner of a thief, with intent to take and to steal all things from the soul. By emerging and showing itself somewhat it purposes to decoy the soul and draw it towards itself to rob it and take itself from it. As saith the prophet: 'Lord take from them their spirit and give them instead thy spirit.' This too the loving soul meant when she said: 'My soul dissolved and melted away when Love spoke his word: when he entered I could not but fail.' And Christ signified it by his words: 'Whosoever shall leave aught for my sake shall be repaid an hundredfold, and whosoever will possess me must deny himself and all things and whosoever will serve me must follow me nor go any more after his own.'

Now peradventure thou wilt say: 'But, Sir, you are wanting to change the natural course of the soul! It is her nature to take in through the senses, in images. Would you upset this arrangement?'

No! But how knowest thou what nobility God has bestowed on human nature, what perfections yet uncatalogued, aye yet

undiscovered ? Those who have written of the soul's nobility have gone no further than their natural intelligence could carry them : they never entered her ground, so that much remained obscure and unknown to them. ' I will sit in silence and hearken to what God speaketh within me,' said the prophet. Into this retirement steals the Word in the darkness of the night. St John says, ' The light shines in the darkness : it came unto its own and as many as received it became in authority sons of God : to them was given power to become God's sons.'

Mark now the fruit and use of this mysterious Word and of this darkness. In this gloom which is his own the heavenly Father's Son is not born alone : thou too art born there a child of the same heavenly Father and no other, and to thee also he gives power. Observe how great the use. No truth learned by any master by his own intellect and understanding, or ever to be learned this side the day of judgment, has ever been interpreted at all according to this knowledge, in this ground. Call it an thou wilt an ignorance, an unknowing, yet there is in it more than in all knowing and understanding without it, for this outward ignorance lures and attracts thee from all understood things and from thyself. This is what Christ meant when he said : ' Whosoever denieth not himself and leaveth not father and mother and is not estranged from all these, he is not worthy of me.' As though to say : he who abandons not creaturely externals can neither be conceived nor born in this divine birth. But divesting thyself of thyself and of everything external thereto does indeed give it thee. And in very truth I believe, nay I am sure, that the man who is established herein can in no wise be at any time separated from God. I hold he can in no wise lapse into mortal sin. He would rather suffer the most shameful death, as the saints have done before him, than commit the least of mortal sins. I hold that he cannot willingly commit, nor yet consent to, even a venial sin, whether in himself or in another. So strongly is he drawn and attracted to this way, so much is he habituated to it, that he could never turn to any other : to this way are directed all his senses, all his powers.

May the God who has been born again as man assist us in this birth, continually helping us, weak man, to be born again in him as God. Amen.

II

THIS IS ANOTHER SERMON

Ubi est qui natus est rex Judæorum ? (*Matt.* 2_2). Where is he who is born King of the Jews ? Now concerning this birth, mark where it befalls. I say again as I have often said before that this

birth befalls in the soul exactly as it does in eternity, neither more nor less, for it is the same birth : this birth befalls in the ground and essence of the soul.

Certain questions arise. Granting that God is in all things as intelligence (or mind) and is more instinct in things than they are in themselves and more natural ; and granting that God wherever he is is in operation, knowing himself and speaking his Word, then mark in what respects the soul is better fitted for this divine operation than other rational creatures God exists in.

God is in all things as being, as activity, as power. But he is procreative in the soul alone for though every creature is a vestige of God, the soul is the natural image of God. This image is perfected and adorned in this birth. No creature but the soul is susceptible to this birth, this act. Such perfection as enters the soul, whether it be divine light, grace or bliss, must needs enter the soul in this birth and no otherwise. Do but foster this birth in thee and thou shalt experience all good and all comfort, all happiness, all being and all truth. What comes to thee therein brings thee true being and stability and whatsoever thou mayst seek or grasp, without it, perishes, take it how thou wilt. This alone gives life ; all else corrupts. Moreover, in this birth thou dost participate in the divine influx and its gifts. This is not received by creatures wherein God's image is not found : the soul-idea belongs to the eternal birth alone and this happens only and solely in the soul, begotten of the Father in the ground and innermost recesses of the soul whereinto never image shone nor soul-power peeped.

Another question is : If this birth befalls in the ground and essence of the soul, then it happens alike in sinner and in saint, so what use or good is it to me ? The ground of nature is the same in both, nay even in hell the nobility of nature persists eternally.—It is characteristic of this birth that it always comes with fresh light. It always brings great enlightenment to the soul because it is the nature of good to diffuse itself. In this birth God pours into the soul in such abundance of light, the ground and essence of the soul are so flooded with it, that it runs over into her powers and into the outward man as well. Thus it befell Paul when upon his journey God touched him with his light and spake to him : the reflection of this light showed outwardly so that his companions saw it surrounding Paul like the saints. The superfluity of light in the ground of the soul wells over into the body which is filled with radiance. No sinner can receive this light nor is he worthy to, being full of sin and wickedness, or darkness. As he (John) says, 'The darkness neither receives nor comprehends the light.' Because the

avenues by which the light would enter are choked and obstructed with guile and darkness. Light and darkness are incompatible, like God and creatures. Enter God, exit creatures. Man is quite conscious of this light. Directly he turns to God this light begins to glint and sparkle in him, telling him what to do and what to leave undone, with many a shrewd hint to boot of things he hitherto ignored and knew nothing of.—How dost thou know?—Suppose thy heart is vehemently moved to retire from the world. How could that be if not by this light? It is so charming, so delightful, it makes other things so tiresome which are not God or God's. It attracts thee to God and thou art sensible of many a virtuous impulse albeit uncertain whence it comes. This interior mood is in no wise due to creatures nor is it any of their bidding, for what creatures effect and direct comes in from without. But thy ground alone is stirred by this force and the freer thou dost keep the more truth and discernment are thine. No man was ever lost save for the reason that once having left his ground he has let himself become too permanently settled abroad. St Augustine says: Many there be that have sought light and truth but only abroad where they are not. They finally go out so far that they never get back nor find their way in again. Neither have these found the truth for the truth is within in their ground, not without. So he who means to see this light and find out the whole truth must foster the awareness of this birth within himself, in his ground, so shall his powers all be lighted up and his outer man as well. Directly God inwardly stirs his ground with the truth its light darts into his powers, and lo, that man knows more than anyone could teach him. As the prophet says, 'I know more than I was ever taught.' It is because this light cannot lighten and shine in sinners that this birth cannot occur in them. This birth is inconsistent with darkness and sin therefore it befalls not in the powers but in the ground and essence of the soul.

Then comes the question: If God the Father labours only in the ground and essence of the soul, not in her powers, what have the powers got to do with it? How do they help by being idle and taking holiday? What is the use, seeing this birth befalls not in the powers?—It is well asked. But consider. Every creature works towards some end. The end is ever the first in intention and the last in execution. And God too works for a wholly blessed end, to wit, himself: to bring the soul and all her powers into that end, into himself. For this God's works are wrought, for this the Father brings his Son to birth in the soul, that all the powers of the soul may end in this. He lies in wait for all the soul contains, all are bidden to his royal feast. Here, the soul is scattered abroad among her powers and dissipated in the act of

each : the power of seeing in the eye, the power of hearing in the ear, the power of tasting in the tongue, and her powers are accordingly enfeebled for their interior work, scattered forces being imperfect. It follows that for her interior work to be effective, she must call in all her powers, recollecting them out of extended things to one interior act. St Augustine says, ' The soul is where she loves rather than where she animates the body.' Once upon a time there was a heathen philosopher who studied mathematics. He was sitting by the embers making calculations in pursuance of his art when there came along a man brandishing a sword, who, not witting that it was the master, cried out, ' Quick, thy name, or I shall slay thee ! ' The master was too much absorbed to see or hear his enemy and failed to catch the threat. So after hailing him several times the enemy cut off his head. And this to acquire a mere natural science ! How much more does it behove us to withdraw from things in order to concentrate our powers on perceiving and knowing the one infinite and immortal truth ! To this end do thou assemble thy entire mind and memory : turn them into the ground where thy treasure lies hid. But for this thou must drop all other activities ; thou must get to unknowing to find it.

The question is, Were it not better for each power to go on with its own work, then none would hinder the others in their work nor yet God in his ? Can there not be creaturely knowledge in me that is no hindrance, as God knows all things without hindrance and so do the saints ?—I answer : The saints behold God in a simple image and in that image they discern all things ; and God himself sees himself thus, perceiving all things in himself. He need not turn, as we do, from one thing to another. Supposing that in this life we were always confronted with a mirror wherein we see and recognise all things at a glance in one single image : neither act nor knowledge would be a hindrance then. At present we must turn from one thing to another : we can only mind one thing at the expense of all the others. And the soul is bound so straitly to her powers that where they flow she must flow with them ; the soul must be present at everything they do, and attentive too, or nothing would come of their exertions. The drain of attending to external acts is bound to weaken her interior operation. For this nativity God wants, and he must have, a vacant, free and unencumbered soul wherein is nothing but himself alone, which waits for naught and nobody but him. As Christ says : ' Whoso loveth aught but me, whoso cleaveth to father or mother, or many other things, he is not worthy of me. I came not upon earth to bring peace but a sword ; to cut away all things, to part thee from brother, child, mother and friend, which are really thy foes.' For verily thy comforts are thy foes. Doth

thine eye see all things and thine ear hear all things and thy heart remember them all, then in these things thy soul is destroyed.

A master says, ' To achieve the interior act one must assemble all one's powers as it were into one corner of one's soul, where, secreted from images and forms one is able to work. We must sink into oblivion and ignorance. In this silence, this quiet, the Word is heard. There is no better method of approaching this Word than in silence, in quiet: we hear it and know it aright in unknowing. To one who knows naught it is clearly revealed.

Haply thou wilt object: ' You place our salvation in ignorance, Sir. That seems a mistake. God made man to know: " Lord make them to know," says the prophet. Where there is ignorance there is defect and illusion: he is a brutish man, an ape, a fool, and so remains as long as he is ignorant.'—But this is transformed knowledge, not ignorance which comes from lack of knowing; it is by knowing that we get to this unknowing. Then we know with divine knowing, then our ignorance is ennobled and adorned with supernatural knowledge. Then in our passion we are more perfect than in action. According to one authority, the sense of hearing is much nobler than the sense of sight, for we learn wisdom more by ear than eye and live this life more wisely. We read about a heathen philosopher who was lying at death's door while his pupils were discussing in his presence some noble science, that, lifting up his dying head and listening, he exclaimed, ' O teach me even now this art that I may practise it eternally! ' Hearing draws in more, seeing leads out more, the very act of seeing. In eternal life we are far more happy in our ability to hear than in our power to see, because the act of hearing the eternal Word is in me, whereas the act of seeing goes forth from me: hearing, I am receptive; seeing, I am active. But our bliss does not consist in being active but in being receptive to God. As God excels creature, so is God's work more excellent than mine. It was out of love that God did set our happiness in suffering, for we undergo far more than we do and receive incomparably more than in return we give; moreover, each divine gift is the preparation for some new and richer gift, each gift increasing our capacity and our desire to receive a greater still. Some theologians say that the soul is symmetrical with God in this respect. For as God is infinite in giving, so the soul is infinite in receiving or conceiving. And the soul is as profound to suffer as God is omnipotent to act, hence her transformation by God into God. God must act and the soul must suffer; for him to know and love himself in her, for her to know with his knowledge, love with his love; and since she is far happier in his than hers it follows that her happiness depends upon his work more than on her own.

The pupils of St Dionysius asked him why Timothy outstripped them in perfection ? Dionysius said, ' Timothy is a God-receptive man. He who is expert at this outstrippeth all men.' In this sense thy unknowing is not a defect but thy chief perfection, and suffering thy highest activity. Kill thy activities and still thy faculties if thou wouldst realise this birth in thee. To find the newborn King in thee all else thou mightest find must be passed by and left behind thee. May we outstrip and leave behind such things as are not pleasing to the newborn King. So help us thou who didst become the child of man that we might become the children of God. Amen.

III

THIS TOO IS MEISTER ECKHART WHO ALWAYS TAUGHT THE TRUTH

In his, quæ patris mei sunt, oportet me esse (*Luc.* 2_{19}). ' I must be about my Father's business.' This text is opportune to what we have to say concerning the eternal birth which took place here in time and is still happening daily in the innermost recesses of the soul, in her ground, remote from all comers. To become aware of this interior birth it is above all necessary to be about our Father's business.

What is peculiarly the Father's ? Power is ascribed to him beyond either of the other Persons. And I tell you, no one can experience this birth without a mighty effort. None can attain this birth unless he can withdraw his mind entirely from things. And it requires main force to drive back all the senses and inhibit them. Violence must be offered to them one and all or this cannot be done. As Christ said : ' The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.'

Regarding this birth there arises the question, Does it happen continuously or only at intervals when one is disposed for it, what time one is exerting oneself to the utmost to forget things altogether and be conscious in this ?

Here let us discriminate. Man possesses an active intellect, a passive intellect and a potential intellect. Active intellect is ever in act, ever doing something, be it in God or in creature, to the honour and glory of God. That is its province and hence its name *active*. But when God undertakes the work the mind must preserve a state of passivity. Potential intellect again has regard to both these, to the action of God and the passion of the soul, to its acting potentially. In the one case the mind is active, when it is functioning, to wit; in the other receptive, when God takes up the work and

then the mind ought, nay must, remain still and allow God to act. Now ere this is begun by the mind and finished by God, the spirit has prevision of it, potential knowledge of its happening. This is the meaning of potential intellect, which, however, is often neglected and does not bear fruit. When the mind is exerting itself in real earnest, God interests himself in the mind and its work, and then the soul sees and experiences God. But since the uninterrupted vision and passion of God is intolerable to the soul in this body, therefore God withdraws from the soul from time to time, as it is said, 'A little while ye see me, and again a little while and ye do not see me.'

When our Lord took his three disciples with him up the mountain and showed them the transfiguration of his body by union with the Godhead, which also we shall have in our archetypal body, straightway Peter, beholding it, was fain to remain there always. Verily, where we find good we are loath to leave it, in so far as it is good. Where intuition finds, love follows and memory and all the soul to boot. And our Lord knowing this hides himself sometimes; for the soul is the impartible form of the body, so she turns as a whole to whatever she turns. Were she conscious of good, God to wit, immediately, uninterruptedly, she would never be able to leave it to influence the body.

Thus it befell Paul: had he remained a hundred years there, where he knew the good, he would never have returned to his body, he would have forgotten it completely. Seeing then that it is wholly foreign to this life, and incompatible therewith, the good God veils it when he will and unveils it again when he chooses and when he knows, like a trusty physician, that it is best and most useful for thee. This withdrawal is not thine, but his whose is also the work; let him do it or not as he will, he knows what is good for thee. It is in his hands to show or not according as he knows thee able to endure it. God is not a destroyer of nature, he perfects it, and this God does ever more and more as thou art fitted for it.

Haply thou wilt object: Alas, Sir, if this requires a mind quite free from images and without activity, albeit both are natural to its powers, then how about those outward works we must do sometimes, works of charity, external ones, such as teaching and comforting those in need thereof: are we debarred by these? things which so occupied our Lord's disciples, notably St Paul, who endured a father's care on account of other people: are we to be deprived of this great good because we are engaged in charities?

The answer is this. The one is perfect, the other very profitable. Mary was praised for choosing the best, but Martha's life was very useful, serving Christ and his disciples. St Thomas says the

active life is better than the life of contemplation, so far as we actually spend in charity the income we derive from contemplation. It is all the same thing ; we have but to root ourselves in this same ground of contemplation to make it fruitful in works, and the object of contemplation is achieved. True, there is motion, but no more than one ; it comes from one end, God, and goes back to the same. As though I went from one end to the other of this house ; that would in sooth be motion, but of one in the same. Even so in this activity we are in the state of contemplation in God. The one is centred in the other and perfects the other. God's purpose in the union of contemplation is fruitfulness in works ; for in contemplation thou servest thyself alone, but the many in good works.

Hereto Christ admonisheth us by his whole life and the lives of all his saints, every one of whom he drove forth into the world to teach the multitude. St Paul said to Timothy, 'Beloved, preach the Word.' Did he mean the outward word that beats the air ? Nay, surely ! He meant the in-born, hidden Word that lies secreted in the soul ; it was this that he exhorted them to preach, to the end that it might be made known to and nourish the powers of such as spend themselves wholly in the exterior life. That what time thy fellow-man hath need of thee thou mayst be found ready to serve him to the best of thy ability. It must be within thee, in thought, in intellect and will, and shine forth in thy deeds. As Christ said, 'Let your light shine before men.' He was thinking of those people who care only for the contemplative life and neglect the virtuous uses of it, which, they say, do not concern them, they are passed that stage. Not these had Christ in mind when he observed : 'The seed fell upon good ground and yielded fruit an hundredfold,' but these he meant when he declared : 'The tree that beareth not fruit shall be cut down.'

Thou mayst object : 'But, Sir, what of that silence you said so much about ? This means images galore. Every one of these acts has its appropriate image, be the act internal or external ; whether it be teaching one or comforting another or arranging this or that, so what quiet can I get withal ? If the mind sees and formulates and the will wills and memory holds it fast, does not all this necessitate ideas ? '

Let me explain. We were speaking just now of the active intellect and the passive intellect. Active intellect abstracts the images of outward things, stripping them of matter and of accidents, and introduces them to the passive intellect, begetting their mental prototypes therein. And the passive intellect made pregnant by the active in this way, knows and cherishes these things with the help of active intellect. Passive intellect cannot keep on

knowing things unless the active intellect keeps on enlightening it. Now observe. What the active intellect does for the natural man that and far more does God do for the solitary soul : he turns out active intellect and installing himself in its stead he himself assumes the duties of the active intellect.

When a man is quite idle, when his intellect is at rest within him, then God takes up the work : he himself is the agent who produces himself in the passive intellect. What happens is this. The active intellect cannot give what it has not got : it cannot have two ideas together, but first one and then the other. What though light and air show multitudes of forms and colours all at once, thou canst only observe them one after another. And so with thy active intellect, which resembles the eye. But when God acts in lieu of thy active intellect he engenders many images together in one point. Suppose God prompts thee to some one good deed, thy powers are all proffered for all virtuous things, thy mind being straightway set on good in general. All thy possibilities for good take shape and come into thy mind collectively, focussed to one point. Clearly this is not the work of thine own intellect which has in no wise the perfection nor plenitude for it ; rather is it the work and product of him who has all forms at once in himself. As Paul says : 'I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me ; in him I am undivided.' Know then, the ideas of these acts are not thine own : they belong to the author of thy nature who has planted therein both their energy and form. Lay no claim thereto, for it is his not thine. True, thou receivest it temporally, but it is gotten and born of God beyond time, in eternity above images.

Thou wilt say, perhaps : From the moment my intellect is divested of its natural activity and no longer has either form or action of its own, what is preserving it ? It must have a hold somewhere ; the powers, whether memory, intellect or will, are bound to have some lodgment somewhere, some place to work in.

The answer is this. Intellect's object and sustenance is essence, not accident, just pure unadulterated being in itself. On descrying something real the intellect forthwith relies upon it, comes to rest thereon, pronouncing its intellectual word concerning the object attained. As long as intellect fails to find the actual truth of things, does not touch bedrock in them, it stays in a condition of quest and expectation, it never settles down to rest, but labours incessantly to trace things to their cause, that is, it is seeking and waiting. It spends perhaps a year or more in research on some natural fact, finding out what it is, only to work as long again stripping off what it is not. All this time it has nothing to go by, it makes no pronouncement at all in the absence of experimental knowledge of the ground of truth. Intellect never rests in this

life. However much God shows himself in this life it is nothing to what he really is. Truth lies in the ground, but veiled and concealed from the intellect. And meanwhile the mind has no support to rest on as on something permanent. It gets no rest at all, but goes on expecting and preparing for something still to come but so far hidden. There is no knowing what God is. Something we do know, namely, what God is not. This the discerning soul rejects. Intellect, meantime, finding no satisfaction in any mortal thing, is waiting, as matter awaits form. As matter is insatiable for form, so is intellect unsatisfied except with the essential, all-embracing truth. Only the truth will do, and this God keeps withdrawing from it step by step, purposing to arouse its zeal and lure it on to seek and grasp the actual causeless good: that, not content with any mortal thing, she may clamour more and more for the highest good of all.

But thou wilt say: 'Alas, Sir, you laid so much stress on our quieting our faculties and now this calm resolves itself into yearning and lamenting: to a muckle moan and clamour for something not possessed, which puts an end to peace and quiet. This may be desire or purpose or praise or thanksgiving or any of their brood, but it is not perfect peace and absolute stillness.'

I answer that, when thou hast emptied thyself entirely of thine own self and all things and of every sort of selfishness and hast transferred, united and abandoned thyself to God in perfect faith and complete amity, then everything that is born in thee or that enters into thee, external or internal, joyful or sorrowful, sour or sweet, is no longer thine own at all, but is altogether thy God's to whom thou hast abandoned thyself. Tell me, whose is the spoken word? His who speaks it or his who hears it? Though it fall to the hearer it really belongs to the speaker, to him who gives it birth. The sun, for example, throws out light into the air and the air receives the light and transmits it to the earth. Now, although the light seems in the air, it is really in the sun: the light is actually from the sun, originating in the sun, not in the air: the air entertains it and passes it on to anything that can be lighted up. And so with the soul. God begets in the soul his child, his Word, and the soul conceiving it passes it on to her powers in varied guise, now as desire, now as good intent, now as charity, now as gratitude, or as it may take thee: It is his, not thine at all. What is thus wrought by God take thou as his and not thine own, as it is written, 'The Holy Ghost asketh in us with unutterable yearnings.' He prays in us, not we ourselves. St Paul says, 'No one is able to say, Lord Jesus Christ, except in the Holy Ghost.'

Above all, lay no claim to anything. Let go thyself and let

God act for thee and in thee as he pleases. This work is his, this Word is his, this birth is his and all thou art to boot. For thou hast abandoned thyself and art gone out of thy faculties and thy personal nature. God installs himself in thy nature and powers when, self-bereft of all belongings, thou dost take to the desert, as it is written, 'A voice crying in the wilderness.' Let this eternal voice cry on in thee at its sweet will and do thou be a desert in respect of self and creatures.

Maybe thou wilt say: 'But, Sir, what must one do to become this desert, void of self and creatures? Should one stay waiting for God all the time and do nothing oneself or should one do something between whiles, such as praying or reading or some good occupation like going to church or studying the Bible? Not, of course, taking things in from without, but everything from within, from one's God. Besides, is there not something we miss by neglecting these things?'

My answer is this: Outward works were instituted and appointed for the purpose of directing the outer man to God and training him to ghostly life and virtues lest haply he should stray out of himself into ineptitudes: to act as a curb upon his inclination to run away from self to things abroad; so that when God shall choose to work in him he shall find him close at hand and not first have to fetch him back from things gross and alien. The greater is the pleasure in external things the harder work it is to leave them; the stronger the love the sharper the pain when it comes to parting.

All pious practices—praying, reading, singing, watching, fasting, penance, or whatever discipline it be—were contrived to catch and keep us from things alien and ungodly. Suppose one feels God's spirit is not working in one, but rather that one's inner man is God-forsaken, that is the proper moment for the outward man to exercise the practical virtues, and particularly such as are most feasible and useful to him; not for his own selfish ends, but that, respect for truth preserving him from being led away by what is gross, he may stick straitly to God who will not need to seek him far afield, but will find him there at hand when he chooses to return and carry on his own work in his soul. But given that a man has genuine experience of the interior life, then let him boldly drop all outward disciplines, even those practices which thou art vowed to and from which neither pope nor prelate can release thee. From vows made to God no man can excuse thee: such vows are a bond between thyself and God. But supposing one has taken solemn vows of fasting, say, or prayer or pilgrimage, then on entering some order, one is released from them forthwith: in the order, obligation is to goodness as a whole, to God himself.

And so I say here. Whatever one's vows to manifold things,

initiation into the real interior life releases from them. While the interior experience lasts, maybe a week, a month, a year, no hours are neglected by the monk or nun, for God who occupies them will also answer for them. On returning to himself the religious shall perform his vows for the time present, but the time elapsed and lost, as thou dost think, 'tis no business of thine to make good. God makes good any time he takes up. Think not to make it good by any act of creature, for the smallest act of God outweighs all the work of creatures put together. I am speaking here of clerks and those enlightened souls who are illumined by God and by the scriptures. But what about the poor profane who, ignorant of corporal discipline, has assumed some vow or other, praying or the like? My view is this. If he finds it hampering and that he draws much nigher God and much more easily without it, let him boldly give it up, for whatever brings nearest to God is the best. Paul implied this when he said: 'But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.' Vows taken before priests, vows of marriage, for example, are very different from these other obligations which amount to solemn promises of oneself to God. Vows taken with the laudable intention of binding oneself to God are for the moment the best way. But supposing that we find a better way, a way we feel and know to be much better, then the first may be deemed null and void.

IV

THE ETERNAL BIRTH

Et cum factus esset Jesus annorum duodecim etc. (*Luc.* 2_{11}). We read in the gospel that when our Lord was twelve years old he went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem into the temple; and when they went out, Jesus remained behind in the temple without their knowing it. And when they reached home and missed him, they sought him among acquaintances and among strangers, among their kindred, and among the multitude, and found him not; they had lost him in the crowd. So there was nothing for it but to return whence they were come; and when they got back to their starting-point, into the temple, there they found him.

If thou wilt find this noble birth, verily thou must quit the multitude and return to the starting-point, into the ground out of which thou art come. The powers of the soul and their works, these are the multitude: memory, understanding and will, these all diversify thee, therefore thou must leave them all: sensible perception, imagination and everything wherein thou findest

thyself and hast thyself in view. Thereafter thou mayest find this birth, but, believe me, not otherwise. He has never been found among friends, nor among kindred nor acquaintances, there rather does one lose him altogether.

Now the question arises, whether this birth is to be found in anything which, albeit relating to God, is nevertheless taken in from without through the senses, in any presentment of God as good, wise, or compassionate, or whatever intellect can conceive of divinity: whether this birth is to be found in any such-like things? In truth, no! for, although good and godlike, they are nevertheless introduced from without through the senses; all must well up from within, out of God, if this birth is to shine with a really clear light, and thy own work must lie over, every faculty serving his ends not thine own. If this work is to be done, God alone must do it, and thou must undergo it. Where from thy willing and knowing thou truly goest out, God with his knowing surely and willingly goes in and shines there clearly. Where God thus knows himself thy knowledge is of no avail and cannot stand. Do not fondly imagine that thy reason can grow to the knowledge of God; that God shall shine in thee divinely no natural light can help to bring about; it must be utterly extinguished and go out of itself altogether, then God can shine in with his light bringing back with him everything thou wentest out of and a thousandfold more, besides the new form containing it all.

Of this we have an allegory in the gospel. When our Lord had talked so friendly with the Gentile woman at the well, she left her pitcher there, and running to the town announced to her people that the true Messiah was come. The people, not believing her report, went out with her to see him for themselves. Then said they unto her, 'Now we believe, not because of thy words, but because we have seen him in person.' Verily, neither by any creaturely science nor by thine own wisdom canst thou be brought to know God divinely. To know God God-fashion, thy knowledge must change into downright unknowing, to a forgetting of thyself and every creature.

Now haply thou wilt say: 'Prithee, Sir, what is the use of my intellect if it has to be inert and altogether idle? Is it my best plan to raise my mind to the unknowing knowing which obviously cannot be anything? For if I knew anything it would not be ignorance, nor should I be idle and destitute. Must I remain in total darkness?'

—Aye, surely! Thou canst do no better than take up thy abode in total darkness and ignorance.

—'Alas, Sir! must everything go then, and is there no return?'

—No, truly! By rights there is no return.

—' But what is this darkness ? What does it mean, what is its name ? '

—It can only be called a potential receptivity, which, however, is not altogether wanting in nor indigent of (real) being : the merely potential conception wherein thou shalt be perfected. Hence there is no return from it. An thou returnest it is not because of any truth ; it is either the senses, the world or the devil. And persisting in this turning back, thou dost inevitably lapse into sin and art liable to backslide so far as to have the eternal fall. Wherefore there is no turning back, only a pressing forward and following up this possibility to its fulfilment. It never rests until fulfilled with all being. As matter never rests until fulfilled with every possible form, so intellect never rests till it is filled to the full of its capacity.

Concerning this a heathen master says : ' Nature has nothing swifter than the heavens which surpass all else in swiftness.' But surely the mind of man outstrips them. Given that it retains its vigour and stays undemeaned and undismembered by what is base and gross, it can outstrip high heaven nor slacken till the summit, where it is fed and cherished by the Arch-Good, by God himself.

How profitable then to ensue this possibility, for by keeping thyself empty and bare, merely tracking and following and giving up thyself to this darkness and ignorance without turning back, thou mayest well win that which is all things. And the more thou art barren of thyself and ignorant of things the nearer thou art thereto. Of this barrenness it is written in Hosea : ' I will lead my friend into the desert and will speak to her in her heart.' The genuine Word of eternity is spoken only in eternity, where man is a desert and alien to himself and multiplicity. For this desolate self-estrangement the prophet longed, saying : ' Who will give me the wings of a dove that I may fly away and be at rest ! ' Where shall I find peace and rest ? Verily in rejection, in desolation and estrangement from all creatures. Wherefore David says : ' I had rather be an abject in the house of my God than have honour and riches in the tabernacles of sinners.'

Now haply thou wilt say : ' Alas, Sir, after all, is it necessary to be barren and estranged from everything, outward and inward : the powers and their works, must all go ? It is a grievous matter for a man thus to be left by God without support ; for God to thus augment his misery, neither enlightening nor encouraging nor working in him, for that is what your teaching means. For a person in such downright nothingness would it not be better to be doing something to beguile the gloom and desolation ; to pray or read or go to church or else make shift by working at some useful occupation ? '

No, be sure of this: absolute stillness, absolute idleness is best of all. Know that thou canst not without harm exchange this state for any other whatsoever. Fain wouldst thou partly fit thyself and let God partly fit thee, but that cannot be. Art never so quick to think of this fitness and desire it, God forestalls thee always. But granting, what is impossible, that it is shared: that the preparation for this working or infusion is jointly his and thine, know then, that God is bound to act, to pour himself out (into thee) as soon as ever he shall find thee ready. Think not it is with God as with a human carpenter, who works or works not as he chooses, who can do or leave undone at his good pleasure. It is not thus with God; but finding thee ready he is obliged to act, to overflow into thee; just as the sun must needs burst forth when the air is bright and clear, and is unable to contain itself. Forsooth, it were a very grave defect in God if, finding thee so empty and so bare, he wrought no excellent work in thee nor primed thee with glorious gifts.

In the same sense philosophers declare that the instant the child-stuff is ready in the mother's womb, God pours into the body its living spirit, that is, the soul the form of the body. It is one flash, the being-ready and the pouring-in. Nature reaching her summit, God dispenses his grace: the instant the spirit is ready God enters without hesitation or delay. In the book of Mystery it is written that our Lord offers himself to men: 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, waiting for someone to let me in, with him will I sup.' Thou needst not seek him here or there, he is no further off than at the door of thy heart; there he stands lingering, awaiting whoever is ready to open and let him in. Thou needst not call to him afar, he waits much more impatiently than thou for thee to open to him. He longs for thee a thousandfold more urgently than thou for him: one point the opening and the entering.

Thou wilt say, perhaps: 'How can that be? I have no inkling of him.'—Know, that to find him is not in thy power but in his. He discovers himself when he chooses and he hides himself too when he will. This is what Christ meant when he said to Nicodemus, 'The spirit breatheth where he will; thou hearest his voice, but knowest not whence he cometh nor whither he goeth.' This is a contradiction: 'Thou hearest but knowest not.' By hearing we know. Christ meant that through hearing it is imbibed or absorbed; as though to say: thou receivest it but unawares. For know, God cannot leave anything void and unfilled; that aught should be empty or void is not to be endured by nature's God. An thou seemest, therefore, not to find him and to be wholly empty of him, yet that is not the case. For were there any

emptiness under heaven, whatever it might be, or great or small, the heavens must either draw it up to them or, bending downwards, fill it with themselves. God, nature's lord, on no account permits of anything remaining empty. Wherefore stand still and waver not, lest turning away from God now for the moment thou never turn back to him again.

Peradventure thou wilt say: 'Well, Sir, since you are always assuming that some day this birth will happen in me, that the Son will be born in me, can I have any sign whereby to recognise that it has taken place?'

Yes, surely! There would be three signs. I will tell you one of them. I am often asked whether it is possible to reach the point of not being hindered by anything in time, either by multiplicity or matter? Indeed it is! If this birth really happens no creature can hinder thee, all point thee to God and this birth. We find in lightning an analogy for this. Whatever it strikes, whether tree, beast or man, it turns towards itself with the shock. A man with his back to it instantly flings round to face it; all the thousand leaves of the tree turn over to front the stroke. So with all whom this birth befalls, they are promptly turned towards this birth with everything present, be it never so earthly. Nay, even what was formerly a hindrance is now nothing but a help. Thy face is turned so full towards this birth, no matter what thou dost see and hear, thou receivest nothing save this birth in anything. All things are simply God to thee who seest only God in all things. Like one who looks long at the sun, he encounters the sun in whatever he afterwards looks at. If this is lacking, this looking for and seeing God in all and sundry, then thou lackest this birth.

Thou mayest question: 'Ought anyone so placed to practise penance? Does he lose anything by dropping penitential exercises?'

Penitential practices, among other things, were instituted for a special object. Fasting, watching, praying, kneeling, scourging, wearing of hair shirts, hard lying or whatever it may be, were all invented because body and flesh stand ever opposed to spirit. The body being far too strong for it, there is always battle joined between them, a never-ending conflict. Here the body is bold and strong for here it is at home; the world helps it, the earth is its fatherland, it is helped by all its kindred: food, drink, ease—all are opposed to spirit. The spirit is an alien here, in heaven are its kindred, its whole race; there dwell its loved ones. To succour the spirit in its distress and to impede the flesh somewhat in this strife lest it conquer the spirit, we put upon it the bridle of penitential practices to curb it, so that the spirit can control it. This is done to bring it to subjection; but to conquer and curb it

a thousand times better, put thou upon it the bridle of love. With love thou overcomest it most surely, with love thou loadest it most heavily. God lies in wait for us therefore with nothing so much as with love. For love is like the fisherman's hook. To the fisherman falls no fish that is not caught on his hook. Once it takes the hook the fish is forfeit to the fisherman; in vain it twists hither and thither, the fisherman is certain of his catch. And so I say of love: he who is caught thereby has the strongest of all bonds and yet a pleasant burden. He who bears this sweet burden fares further, gets nearer therewith than by using any harshness possible to man. Moreover, he can cheerfully put up with whatever befalls, cheerfully suffer what God inflicts. Naught makes thee so much God nor God so much thine own as this sweet bond. He who has found this way will seek no other. He who hangs on this hook is so fast caught that foot and hand, mouth, eyes and heart and all that is man's is bound to be God's.

So then thou canst not, better than by love, prevail over thy foe and stop him doing thee a mischief. Wherefore it is written: 'Love is strong as death and hard as hell.' Death separates soul from body, but love separates all things from the soul; she will not tolerate at any cost what is not God nor God's. Who is caught in this net, who walks in this way, whatsoever he works is wrought by love, whose alone the work is: busy or idle it matters nothing. Such an one's most trivial action is more profitable, his meanest occupation is more fruitful to himself and other people and to God is better pleasing than the cumulative works of other men, who, though free from mortal sin, are yet inferior to him in love. He rests more usefully than others labour.

Await thou therefore this hook, so thou be happily caught, and the more surely caught so much the more surely freed.

That we may be thus caught and freed, help us O thou who art love itself. Amen.

V

DEUS CHARITAS EST

Deus charitas est et qui manet in charitate in deo manet et deus in eo (*1 Joh.* 4_{16}). 'God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.' This is the epistle we read at Mass, and it is St John speaking.

Take the opening words: 'God is love.' That is so, inasmuch as all that can love, all that does love, he compels by his love to love him. God is love, secondly, inasmuch as every God-created and loving thing compels him by its love to love it, willy-nilly.

God is love, thirdly, inasmuch as his love drives all his lovers out of multiplicity. The love of God in multiplicity pursues the love which is himself right out of multiplicity into his very unity. God is love, fourthly, who by his love provides all creatures with their life and being, preserving them in his love. The colour of the cloth is preserved in the cloth : even so creatures are preserved in existence by love, that is, God. Take the colour from cloth, its subsistence is gone : so do creatures all lose their subsistence if taken from love, to wit, God. God is love, and so lovely is he that lovers all love him, willy-nilly. No creature is so vile as to love what is bad. What we love must be good or must seem to be good. But creaturely good, all told, is rank evil as compared with God. St Augustine says, ' Love, that in meditating love thou mayst provide the wherewithal to satisfy thy soul.' God is love.

My children, mark me, I pray you. Know ! God loves my soul so much that his very life and being depend upon his loving me, whether he would or no. To stop God loving me would be to rob him of his Godhood ; for God is love no less than he is truth ; as he is good, so is he love as well. It is the absolute truth, as God lives. There were certain theologians who maintained that the love which is within us is the Holy Ghost, but this is false. For the bodily food we take is changed into us, but the spiritual food we receive changes us into itself, hence love divine is not preserved in us, otherwise there would be two. Divine love preserves us in itself as one in the same.

' God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.' There is a difference between ghostly things and bodily things. One ghostly thing dwells in another ; but nothing bodily dwells in another. There may be water in a tub, with the tub round it. But where the wood is the water is not. In this sense no material thing dwells in another. But spiritual things dwell in each other : each several angel with all his joy and happiness is in every other angel as well as in himself, and every angel with all his joy and happiness dwells in me, and God to boot with his entire beatitude, though I discern it not.

If anyone should ask me what God is, I should answer : God is love, and so altogether lovely that creatures all with one accord essay to love his loveliness, whether they do so knowingly or unbeknownst, in joy or sorrow. Instance the lowest angel in his pure nature : the smallest spark or love-light that ever fell from him would light up the whole world with love and joy. See his innate perfection ! Moreover, as I have explained at various times, the angels are numerous beyond number.—But to leave love and come to knowledge. If only we knew God it would be easy to forsake the world. All that God ever made or shall yet make,

all this (I say), if God should give it to my soul without himself, he staying, so to speak, a hair's-breadth off, would not content my soul nor make me happy. I am happy when all things are in me and God, and where I am God is, and where God is I am.

'He who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.' Suppose I am in God, then where he is I am; and if God is in me, then, unless the scriptures lie, where I am God is. It is the absolute truth, as God is God.

'Faithful servant, I will set thee over all my goods,' *i.e.* the manifold goodness of God in creatures will I set thee over. Secondly, 'I will set thee over all my goods' means: at the source of creature happiness, in the pure unity of God himself wherein he has his own felicity. In other words: God being *the good*, in that sense will he set us above his manifold goodness. Thirdly, he will set us over all his goods, means: above all nameables, all effables, all so-called good things and all intelligibles. Thus he sets us over all his goods.

'Father, I pray thee, make them one as I and thou are one.' Where two grow one, one loses its nature. Ergo, for God and the soul to be one the soul has to lose her own life and nature. They are one as regards what is left. But for them to be one, one must lose its identity and the other must keep its identity. Then they are the same. Now, the Holy Ghost says: 'I pray thee, let them be one as we are one. I pray thee, make them the same in us.'

When I pray for aught my prayer goes for naught; when I pray for naught I pray as I ought. When I am one with that wherein are all things, past, present and to come, all the same distance and all just the same, then they are all in God and all in me. There is no thought of Henry or of Conrad. Praying for aught save God alone is idolatry and unrighteousness. They pray aright who pray in spirit and in truth. When praying for someone, for Henry or Conrad, I pray at my weakest. When praying for no one I pray at my strongest, and when I want nothing and make no request I am praying my best, for in God is no Henry nor no Conrad. To pray to God for aught save God is wrong and faithless, and, as it were, an imperfection. For to set up something beside God is, as I lately said, but to make naught of God and God of naught. Whoso is far and foreign to himself as the chief angel of the Seraphim is far from him, that man owns that same angel just as God does and is God, and that's the naked truth, as God is God. 'God is love, and he that is in love is in God and God in him.'

May all of us attain this love whereof I speak. So help us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VI

JESUS WENT INTO THE TEMPLE

Intravit Jesus in templum dei et ejiciebat omnes vendentes et ementes etc. (*Matt.* 21_1). We read in the gospel that our Lord went into the temple and cast out all them that sold and bought and said to them that sold doves: 'Take these things hence!' It was his purpose to have the temple cleared, as though he said: This temple is by rights mine own and I want it to myself to be lord therein. This temple that God means to rule in is man's soul which he has made exactly like himself, as saith the Lord, 'We will make man in our image and likeness.' Which he did. So like himself God made man's soul that nothing else in earth or heaven resembles God so closely as the human soul. God wants this temple cleared of everything but himself. This is because this temple is so agreeable to him and he is so comfortable in this temple when he is there alone.

Now consider who they were that sold and bought therein and who they are still. Mark me well: I name none but the virtuous. Yet, even so, I can point out who the merchants were, and still are to this day, that thus buy and sell: those whom our Lord drove forth and cast out. He still does so to those that buy and sell in this temple: he would not leave a single one therein. Lo, they are merchants all who, while avoiding mortal sin and wishing to be virtuous, do good works to the glory of God, fasts, for example, vigils, prayers, etc., all of them excellent, but do them with a view to God's giving them somewhat, doing to them somewhat, they wish for in return. All such are merchants. This is plain to see, for they reckon on giving one thing for another and so to barter with our Lord, though they are mistook as to the bargain. For all they have and have the power to do, they have from God and do effect by means of God alone. God has no call to do to them or give to them anything unless he choose to. For what they are they are from God and what they have they get from God, not from themselves. God is in no wise bounden to requite their acts or gifts, except he care to do so of his own free will, apart from what they do or give; for they give not of their own nor do they act of their own selves, as God says, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' They be sorry fools who bargain with our Lord like this; they know little or nothing of the truth. God cast them out of the temple and drove them forth. For light and darkness cannot dwell together. God is the truth, he is the light itself. When God enters the temple he drives out ignorance and darkness, revealing himself in the light of truth. Merchants go when the

truth appears, for the truth needs no merchanting. God seeks not his own, he is perfectly free in all his acts, which he does in true love. So does the man who is at one with God: he is perfectly free in all his deeds; he does them out of love and without why, just to glorify God, not seeking his own therein, God energising in him.

Moreover I maintain: as long as we work at all for gain, while we desire aught God may have given or may give, we rank with these merchants. Wouldst thou be free from any taint of trade? then do what good thou canst and do it solely to God's glory, as exempt from it thyself as though thou wert not. Ask nothing whatever in return. So done thy works are ghostly and godly; the merchants are driven from the temple and God is there alone when one has no intention but God. Behold thy temple cleared of merchants. The man who is intent on God alone and on God's glory, verily he is free from any taint of commerce in his deeds, nor is he in any wise self-seeking.

I have related further how Jesus said to them that sold doves: 'Take these things hence!' These people he did not drive forth nor rebuked them harshly: he said quite mildly: 'Take these things away!' As though to say, it is not wrong albeit a hindrance to the pure and simple truth. These are virtuous folk, working for God impersonally though subject to personal limitations, to time and number, to before and after. Their activities keep them from the highest truth, from being absolutely free like our Lord Jesus Christ who is receiving himself afresh incessantly and a-temporally from his heavenly Father and in that same now is borne back again unceasingly with praise and thanksgiving into the Father, perfect, vieing with him in his majesty. Even so, to be receptive to the sovran truth, a man must be without before and after, without the hindrance of any acts or images that are within his ken, but freely receiving the divine gift in the perennial now and bearing it back unhindered in the light of the same with praise and thanksgiving in our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the doves are gone, to wit, the obstacle of ownership in actions, good in themselves, wherein one has any self-interest at all. 'Take these things hence!' said our Lord, as though to say, they are blameless but they are in the way.

When the temple is free from obstructions (possessions and strangers to wit), it looks right beautiful, shining out bright and clear above everything God has created and through everything God has created, so that none can compare with it but the uncreated God alone. In very truth, there is none like this temple but the uncreated God himself. Nothing below the angels is the least like this temple. The very highest angels are the same as this

temple of the human soul in many ways, but not entirely. This partial likeness with the soul they have in love and knowledge. But there is a limit set them which they cannot pass. The soul goes on beyond. Suppose the soul to be identical with the highest human being here in time, natheless that man has the potential freedom to soar to untold heights above the angels in the now of each, new without number, that is, without mode : above the angelic mode and every created intelligence. God who alone is uncreated is her sole peer in freedom, though not in uncreatedness, for the soul is created. Emerging into the unclouded light she in her naught leaps so far into his naught that she is helpless to regain the state of her created aught. God with his uncreatedness supports her nothing-at-all, preserving the soul in his all-in-all. The soul has dared to come to naught and, failing by herself to reach herself, she swoons away ere God comes to her rescue. It must needs be so.

Jesus, as I said, went into the temple and cast out them that bought and sold and he began to command the rest, ' Take these things hence ! ' The words I have here read, ' Jesus went in and began to say, " Take these things hence ! " ' Observe, there was no one there but Jesus when he began to speak in the temple of the soul. Be sure of this : while anyone else is speaking in the temple (*i.e.* the soul) but Jesus, Jesus is silent, as though he were away, nor is he at home in the soul while she has strange guests to talk to. For Jesus to speak in the soul she must be all alone, and she has to be quiet to hear what he says. Well then, he comes in and starts speaking. What is it he says ? He says what he is. What is he, then ? He is the Word of the Father. In this same Word the Father speaks himself, all his divine nature, all that God is, just as he knows it, and he knows it as it is, for he is perfect in knowledge and power. It follows that he is perfect in speech too. In pronouncing the Word he utters himself and all things in another Person to whom he gives the nature that he has himself, and speaks all intelligences in echo of the actual Word, *according to* the indwelling image ; like the sun-rays shining forth, so each (intelligence) is a word in itself, not the same in all respects as the Word, but : they have the power to receive by grace the same nature as the actual Word, and this Word as it is in itself the Father spoke entire by the Word and everything in that Word.

If this is what the Father said, then what is Jesus saying in the soul ? As I have told : the Father speaks his Word ; he speaks in this Word and no otherwhere, and Jesus speaks in the soul. His manner of speaking is to reveal himself and what the Father said in him, so far as the soul is able to receive it. He reveals the

Father in the soul in infinite power. Experiencing this power in the Son the soul waxes powerful in like emanation till she is the same in might and virtue and every perfection, so that neither joy nor sorrow nor aught that God has made in time avails to destroy that soul, she standing staunch as it were in this divine power against which all else is insignificant and futile.

Secondly: Jesus reveals himself in the soul in infinite wisdom, himself to wit, the wisdom wherein the Father knows himself in full paternal power. The very Word, which is wisdom itself, and all that is therein, is, at the same time, *one alone*. When wisdom is in union with the soul, doubt, error and illusion are entirely removed, she is set in the bright pure light of God himself, as saith the prophet, 'Lord in thy light shall we see light.' Then God is known by God in the soul; she discerns with his wisdom both herself and all things. She knows not this same wisdom with herself, but with this widsom she discerns the Father fruitful in travail and his real being in impartible oneness void of all distinctions.

Jesus manifests himself further in infinite suavity and fullness in all receptive hearts. When Jesus reveals himself in this plenitude of sweetness, uniting with the soul, then on this amiable tide the soul floats into herself and out of herself and beyond the things of grace, back in unmitigated power into her first source. Thus the outward man is obedient, even unto death, to the inner man now established in peace in the service of God for ever.

May Jesus enter into us and clear out and cast away all hindrances of soul and body to the end that we are one with him here upon earth and there in heaven. So help us God. Amen.

VII

THE SONS OF GOD

Videte, qualem charitatem dedit nobis pater, ut filii dei nominemur et simus (*1 Joh.* 3_1). It must be understood that this is all the same thing: knowing God and being known by God, and seeing God and being seen by God. We know God and see him because he makes us know and see. Even as the luminous air is not distinguishable from its luminant, for it is luminous with what illumines it, so do we know by being known, by his making us conscious. Christ said, 'Again ye shall see me.' That is to say: by making you see I make you see me, whereat 'your heart shall rejoice,' rejoice in the vision and knowledge of God, and 'your joy no man taketh from you.'

St John says : ' Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be the sons of God.' He says not only ' should be called ' but ' should be.' Now I maintain that we can no more be wise without wisdom than Son without the filial nature of God's Son : without having the very same nature as the Son of God himself. Wouldst thou be the Son of God ? Thou canst not, without having the same nature as the Son of God. But this is hidden from us here, as it is written, ' Beloved, now we are God's sons (and it doth not yet appear what we shall be), but we know that he is our exemplar and we shall be like him.' That is, the same as he is : same life and enjoyment and understanding ; exactly the same as he is, when we see him as God. I say, God cannot make me the Son of God without I have the nature of God's Son, any more than God can make me wise without my having wisdom. Though we are God's sons, we do not realize it yet : ' it doth not yet appear ' to us, but this much we do know, he says, ' we shall be like him.' Sundry things in our souls overlay this knowledge and conceal it from us.

The soul has something in her, a spark of intellect, that never dies ; and in this spark, as at the apex of the mind, we place the paradigm of the soul ; and there is also in our souls knowledge of externals, sensible and rational perception, present there as images and words which obscure it from us. How are we God's sons ? By having one nature with him. But any realization of this, of being God's sons, is subjective not objective knowledge. The inner consciousness strikes down to the very essence of the soul. Not that it is the soul itself, but it is rooted there and is in a measure the life of the soul, her intellectual life, the life, that is, wherein a man is born God's Son, born into the eternal life, for this knowledge is a-temporal, unextended, without *here* and without *now*. In this life all things are the same thing and all things common ; all things are all in all and all atoned.

I will give you an illustration. In the body the members are united so that eye belongs to foot and foot to eye. Could the foot speak, it would declare that the eye seems rather in the foot than in the head, and the eye would say the same the other way about. Accordingly, I trow that the grace which is in Mary is really more an angel's and is more in him (yet being in Mary) than if it were in him or in the saints. For everything that Mary has belongs to every saint, so the grace in Mary is his own and he enjoys it more than if it really were in him.

But such a simile is too gross and carnal, depending as it does on bodily imagery. I will give you another, therefore, more subtle, less material. I assert that in heaven all is in all and all one

and all ours. The grace our Lady has exists in me (when I am yonder), not as welling up in and flowing out of Mary, but as in me as my own and not of foreign origin. I contend that there what one has another has, not as from another nor as in another, but in its own self, so that the grace in one is simultaneously in another as his own grace. Thus spirit is in spirit. And that is why I say I cannot be the son of God unless I have the very nature the Son of God has there; and that having this same nature makes us the same as he is, we seeing him as God. 'But it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Meaning, I take it, that there is then no like nor different, but: wholly without distinction we are the same in essence and in substance and in nature as he is himself. This is not apparent now: it will be obvious when we see him as God.

God makes us to know him, and his knowing is his being, and his making me know is the same as my knowing, so his knowing is mine: just as, in the master, what he teaches is the same as, in the pupil, the thing that he is taught. And because his knowing is mine, and his knowing is his substance and his nature and his essence, it follows that his substance and his nature and his essence are mine. And his substance, his nature and his essence being mine, therefore I am the Son of God. Behold, brethren, what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be the Son of God!

Mark whereby we are sons of God: by having the same nature as the Son of God.—How can one be the Son of God, or know it, seeing that God is not like anybody?—True, Isaias says, 'To whom will ye liken God or what likeness will ye compare unto him?' Since it is God's nature to be not like anyone, we must needs not be so to be the same as he is. When I contrive to see myself in naught and to see naught in me; when I succeed in rooting up and casting out everything in me, then I am free to pass into the naked being of the soul. Likes must be ousted ere I can be transplanted into God and be the same as he is: same substance, same essence, same nature and the Son of God. Once this happens, there is nothing hid in God that is not revealed, that is not mine. I am wise and mighty just as he is, and one and the same with him. Then Sion is a true beholder, true Israel, a seer: God, since nothing in the Godhead is concealed from him. Man is turned into God. But that nothing may be concealed from me, everything revealed, there must appear in me no *like*, no image, for no image can show us God's nature nor his essence. While there abideth in thee any image or *like* thou art never *the same* as God. To be the same as God there must be nothing in thee, latent or defined, nothing covered in thee that is not discovered and cast out.

Mark what sin is. It is born of negation. Negation's brood must be exterminated in the soul; while there is *not* in thee thou art not the Son of God. We weep and lament for want of something. The minus quantity must go, be cancelled out, if man is to become the Son of God and weep and wail no more. Man is not wood nor stone: imperfection and naught. We shall not be like him until this minus is made good and we are all in all as God is all in all.

There are two births of man: one in the world, the other one out of the world and ghostly, in God. Wouldst know if thy child is born and if he is naked? Whether, that is to say, thou hast been made God's Son? If thy heart is heavy, except for sin, thy child is not born. In thine anguish thou art not yet mother: thou art in labour and thine hour is nigh. Doubt not, if thou art travailing for thyself or for thy friend no birth has taken place though birth be close at hand. The birth is not over till thy heart is free from care: then man has the essence and nature and substance and wisdom and joy and all that God has. Then the very being of the Son of God is ours and in us and we attain to actual Deity.

Christ says: 'If any will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' That is: cast away care and let perpetual joy reign in your heart. Thus the child is born. And when the child is born in me, the sight of friends, of father, dead there before my eyes will leave my heart untouched. Were my heart moved thereby the child would not be born in me, though peradventure its nativity is nigh. I maintain that God and his angels take such keen delight in every act a good man does, that there is no joy like it. And accordingly, I say, the birth of this child in thee brings thee most keen delight in all good deeds done in this world, thy joy being so continuous as to be never-ending. Hence the words: 'Your joy no man taketh from you.' When I am transported into God, then God is mine and all he has. 'I am the Lord thy God,' he says. Then I have real delight which neither pain nor sorrow can take from me, for then I am installed in God where sorrow has no place. We shall see that in God is no anger nor sadness, but only love and joy. Though he seem sometimes to be wrathful with sinners it is not really wrath, it is his kindness, the effect of his great love: 'Whom he loveth he chasteneth,' for he is love, the Holy Ghost. God's anger springs from love; he chides us with dispassion. When nothing is grievous or hard, when all is pure joy, then verily thy child is born. Strive that this child shall be not nascent merely but be born in thee, even as in God his Son is ever being born and is ever born. May this betide, So help us God. Amen.

VIII

THE CASTLE OF THE SOUL

Intravit Jesus in quoddam castellum et mulier quædam excepit illum etc. (*Luc.* 10_{38}). I quote first in Latin this text from the gospel. The translation reads: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ went up into a certain fastness and was received by a certain virgin who was a wife.'

Mark the term. Needs must it be a virgin by whom Jesus is received. Virgin is, in other words, a person void of alien images, free as he was when he existed not. It may be questioned: Man born and launched on rational life, how can he be as free from images as he was when he was not, he knowing a variety of things, images all of them: how can he possibly be void thereof?

I answer that, were I sufficiently intelligent to have within me intellectually the sum of all the forms conceived by man and which subsist in God himself, I having no property in them and no idea of ownership, positive or negative, past or to come, but standing in the present *now* perfectly free in the will of God and doing it perpetually: then verily I were a virgin, unhandicapped by forms, just as I was when I was not.

Further, I hold that the fact of being virgin does not deprive a man at all of works that he has done: he is untrammelled, virgin-free of them in the sovran truth, even as Jesus is absolutely free and virgin in himself. According to the masters, likeness, likeness only, is the cause of union, so man must be maiden, virgin, to receive the virgin Jesus.

Now lay this fact to heart: the ever virgin is never fruitful. To be fruitful the soul must be wife. Spouse is the noblest title of the soul, nobler than virgin. For a man to receive God within him is good and in receiving he is virgin. But for God to be fruitful in him is still better: the fruits of his gift being gratitude therefor, and in this newborn thankfulness the spirit is the spouse bearing Jesus back into his Father's heart.

Many good gifts received in maidenhood are not brought forth in wifely fruitfulness, reborn in praise and thanks to God. Such gifts corrupt and come to naught, man being no better and no happier for them. In this case his virginity is useless because to his virginity he does not add the perfect fruitfulness of wife. That is the mischief. Hence my text, 'Jesus ascended to a certain fastness and was received by a certain maid who was a wife.' It must be so, as I have said.

Wedded folks yield little more than one fruit yearly. But it is other wedded ones that I have now in mind: those whose hearts

are wedded to praying, fasting, vigils or other outward discipline and mortifications of the flesh. A predilection for this sort of thing, involving loss of freedom to wait instantly on God in the here and now, and follow him alone in the light wherein he would fain show thee what to do and what to leave undone, moment by moment, fresh and clearly, as though thou hadst naught else, nor would nor could not: any such proclivity or preoccupation which constantly deprives thee of this freedom I call here a year, and thy soul yields no fruit till she is done with this work of thy affection nor hast thou any trust in God or in thyself till thou hast finished with thy predilection; in other words, thou hast no peace. There is no fruit till thy own work is done. I reckon this a year and one whose yield is poor; the proceeds of affection not of freedom. And these folks I call wedded, yolked to their affections. Their crop is small and undersized at that, so I say, in God's sight.

The virgin wife, free and unbound in her affections is ever as near God as to herself. She abounds in fruit and big withal, no more nor less than God is himself. This fruit, his birth, does that virgin bear who is a wife; daily she yields her hundred and her thousandfold, nay, numberless her labours and her fruits in that most noble ground, the very ground, to speak more plainly, wherein the Father is begetting his eternal Word: there she is big with fruit. For Jesus, light and shine of the paternal heart (according to St Paul he is the 'light and splendour' of the Father's heart), this Jesus is atoned with her and she with him, she is radiant with him and shining as the one alone, as one pure brilliant light in the paternal heart.

Elsewhere I have declared, there is a power in the soul untouched by time and flesh, flowing from the Spirit, remaining in the Spirit, altogether spiritual. In this power is God, ever verdant, flowering in all the joy and glory of his actual self. Such dear delight, such inconceivable deep joy as none can fully tell, for in this power the eternal Father is procreating his eternal Son without a pause, the power being big with child, the Father's Son and its own self this self-same Son withal, in the unique power of the Father. Suppose a man absolute monarch, the sole possessor of all earthly goods; suppose he gave up all for God and was the poorest of the poor; and that God laid on him to boot a burden big as ever he did lay on mortal man, all which he bare down to his death and then God granted him one fleeting vision of his being in this power: so vehement would be his joy that poverty and suffering would be wiped out. Aye, though God gave him never any taste of heaven but this, yet would he have the guerdon of his passion, for God himself is in this power as in the eternal *now*. If a man's spirit were always joined to God in this same power, he could not age

For the *now* wherein God made the first man and the *now* wherein the last man disappears and the *now* I speak in, all are the same in God where there is but *the now*. Behold this man in the same light as God having in him no past nor yet to come, only one level of eternity. This man in truth has motion taken from him and all things stand intrinsic in him. Nothing new comes to him from future things nor yet by accident for he dwells in *the now*, ever new and unceasingly renewed. So dominant is God in this same power.

There is another power, immortal too: proceeding from the Spirit, remaining in the Spirit, altogether spiritual. In this power God is fiery, aglow with all his riches, with all his sweetness and with all his bliss. Aye, in this power is such poignant joy, such vehement, immoderate delight as none can tell nor yet in truth reveal. I say, moreover, if once a man in intellectual vision did really glimpse the bliss and joy therein, then all his sufferings, all God intends that he should suffer, would be a trifle, a mere nothing to him; nay, I say more, it would be pure joy and pleasure.

Wouldst thou know for certain whether thy sufferings are thine own or God's? Tell by these tokens. Suffering for thyself, in whatever way, the suffering hurts thee and is hard to bear. But suffering for God and God alone thy suffering hurts thee not nor does it burden thee, for God bears the load. Believe me, if there were a man willing to suffer on account of God and of God alone, then though he fell a sudden prey to the collective sufferings of all the world it would not trouble him nor bow him down, for God would be the bearer of his burden. If the burden they put upon my neck is forthwith shouldered by another I would as lief a hundred pounds as one, for not to me is it heavy and distressful. In brief: man's sufferings for God and God alone he makes both light and pleasant.

I prefaced this sermon with the words: 'Jesus went up into a fastness and was received by a virgin who was wife.' Why? She must needs be virgin and wife too. How Jesus was received I have explained. I have not told the meaning of this fastness and that I will now proceed to do.

From time to time I tell of the one power in the soul which alone is free. Sometimes I have called it the tabernacle of the soul; sometimes a spiritual light, anon I say it is a spark. But now I say: it is neither this nor that. Yet it is somewhat: somewhat more exalted over this and that than the heavens are above the earth. So now I name it in a nobler fashion than before as regarding rank and mode which it transcends. It is of all names free, of all forms void: exempt and free as God is in himself. It is one and simple as God is one and simple, and no man can in any wise

behold it. This same power I am speaking of, herein God blooms and thrives in all his Godhood and the spirit in God; in this very power the Father bears his only Son no less than in himself, for verily he liveth in this power, the spirit with the Father giving birth therein to his very Son, itself this selfsame Son, for in this light which is the light of truth, it is the Son himself. Could ye see with my heart ye would understand my words, but it is true, for truth itself has said it.

So one and simple is this fastness, frowning above all ways, of which I mind me and am telling you, within the soul, that this high faculty I speak of is not worthy even of a fleeting glance therein; nor is that other power God glows and burns in, it durst not peer in either; so one and indivisible this refuge is, so way- and power-transcending this solitary one that never mode nor faculty has any insight there, not even God himself. Never for an instant, as God lives, does God see into this, nor did he ever look in his conditioned nature, in his guise of Person. Note well, this *one alone* is lacking in every mode and quality. It follows that for God to see therein would cost him all his divine names and personal properties: all these he must forgo to look therein: only as one and indivisible, having no jot of mode or quality, not Father nor Son nor Holy Ghost as such, can he do this; as somewhat, yes, but not as this or that.

As one and impartible behold him entering this one that here I call the fastness of the soul, but in no different guise can he get in: thus only does he enter and subsist in it. In part the soul is the same as God but not altogether.—This that I tell you is true: truth is my witness and my soul the pledge. May we be as this fastness whereinto on ascending Jesus is received to abide eternally as I have said. So help us God. Amen.

IX

THE ETERNAL BIRTH [1]

To return to the subject of the eternal birth. There is the question whether the soul brings forth the eternal Word in images or imageless? Remember this. When the soul resigns herself to God and is atoned with him and God undertakes her work, she is receptive merely and leaves God to act. Here the soul is pregnant without form or image, for anything conceived in form or image trenches upon time and place and is akin to creatures; whence it follows that the more the work is of the soul the less it is of God.

[1] See Pfeiffer, *Deut. Myst.*, vol. i, p. 26

The soul conceives more truly without images than in them, for this birth is more by way of Godhood than of selfhood. But we may still enquire, in which image does the soul best succeed in giving birth to the eternal Word? There are three kinds of images. The first the soul takes in from without through the senses. The second the soul conjures up from within by thinking on the childhood of our Lord or on his martyrdom; but all images so gotten are called divine births in the soul. The third kind of images is given to the soul by God direct. It is in these last that the soul conceives the best. According to another gloss: this happens when the mind engenders, feels and knows the eternal Word in its proper image as gotten by the Father in himself, supposing the soul able to attain thereto; or, intellect failing her for this, when, faring forth in faith and love, he reaches out to this same image: for in this final image the eternal Word is born most perfectly of all.

Another question is, whether the birth of the eternal Word is fleeting or essential? Now you must understand that it is this birth which unifies the soul, and in this respect it is intrinsic and passes not away unless a man should fall into mortal sin. But as happening in the sensible perceptions and in the discursive mind this birth is fugitive.

Further, it is asked, in what particular place does the soul bring forth or seek the eternal Word? Mark. It is in the Father as the intellectual image of his divine essence and is the reflection of his divine nature, so that it embodies both his essence and his nature. It is with the Father as the filial Person. It is in the Holy Ghost as the exuberance of their eternal satisfaction. It is in the soul as the likeness of God's equal forms (or Persons). It is in all creatures as the preserver of their being. It is here the soul must seek the eternal Word, here in these places, and Christ says: 'Seek and ye shall find.' May we so seek as to find eternally. So help us almighty God. I will say no more at this collation. Pray God to fit me for this blessed moment. Amen.

X

MAN HAS TO SEEK GOD IN ERROR AND FORGETFULNESS [1]

Man has to seek God in error and forgetfulness and foolishness. For deity has in it the power of all things and no thing has the like. The sovran light of the impartible essence illumines all things.

[1] Jostes, No. 3.

St Dionysius says that beauty is good order with pre-eminent lucidity. Thus God is an arrangement of three Persons. And the soul's lower powers should be ordered to her higher and her higher ones to God; her outward senses to her inward and her inward ones to reason; thought to intuition and intuition to the will and all to unity, so that the soul may be alone with nothing flowing into her but sheer divinity, flowing here into itself. As St Dionysius says, By purity she has discovered her capacity and only her superior powers are in operation.

It has been said by one philosopher that as soon as the chief power takes command the others all run into it, leaving their own work. Then the soul is in order and in her pure nature, *i.e.* in her supernal light-nature wherein all things are potential. A heathen doctor says, If the soul knew herself she would know all things. Deity flowed into the Father and into the Son and into the Holy Ghost: in eternity into itself and in time into creatures, to each as much as it can hold: to the stone its being, to the tree its growth, to beasts sensation, to the angels reason and to mankind all these four natures. When God was made man he took upon himself by grace, in time, the nature of all things, which in eternity was his by nature. As St Paul says, 'To me Christ is all things.' Here it was a matter of the light and reflection of his own nature. God's being is fontal: flowing and fixed, final as well as the first. From being power flows out into work. In this sense the three Persons are the storehouse of divinity and the three Persons are poured forth into the essence of the soul as grace. God's being in the essence of the soul is the imitation of the Persons and one being permeates the other. Her chief power flows from the essence of the soul just as the three Persons issue from the Godhead. And when God pours his grace into the soul it is into her essence that he pours it. For into the soul's essence no speck can ever fall, do her powers what they may. The chief power of the soul draws its virtue from the grace existing in the essence of the soul and this highest power goes out into the lower ones, into their essence. The crescent soul, the spirit receptive of God's nature, is the imitation of Christ's Person and man's nature. The soul when she reaches divine nature is deprived of all deficiency and imperfection; she suffers death in divine nature, getting God's nature in herself as the Father does in him. She takes it not from her own nature, she receives it from God's nature into her nature; she receives perfection and power according to the words of St Paul, 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.' The wisdom thence arising in her mind begins in understanding and is perfected in will and it has neither heart nor thought. St Dionysius says, As the soul takes the outgoing tide

to journey in eternity and time and in her own intelligence, so on the ebb does she return ; as God the soul flows back again, without exertion. God returns to himself as little mindful of his own as though they were not. And the soul shall do the same. She shall grasp with her manhood the Person of the Son, and with the Person of the Son she shall apprehend the Father and the Holy Ghost in both, and them both in the Holy Ghost ; and with the Person of the Father she shall apprehend his simple essence, and with the essence the abyss, and shall sink into the void without matter and without form. Matter and form, being and knowledge, she loses in this unity, for she herself has come to naught. God does all her work, he preserves her in his being and leads her in his power into his very Godhead where she flows with deity itself into all God flows into. She is all things' place and has herself no place. This is the most eternal wisdom, which has neither heart nor thought. So nigh soul flows to God that many are deceived ; but what she is she is by grace, and where she is she is by another's power. Yet she approaches near enough to God to be, in the power of the Father, invested with divinity by grace the same as the Father is by nature. St Paul says : 'In the same image we shall go from one glory to another,' meaning, we shall receive divinity in its perfection and all that is consequent thereon. Therein she shall conceive divinity as it conceives itself and her will and God's will shall be one : whatever God may be we shall be with God. No one can attain it in this body, but when God gives the soul his final gift, the vision of his Godhead, the soul is raised up in the Trinity. May we attain to this, So help us God. Amen.

XI

THE HOUR COMETH AND NOW IS

Mulier, venit hora et nunc est, quando veri adoratores adorabunt patrem in spiritu et veritate (*Joh.* 4_{23}). This comes from St John's Gospel. I take one sentence from a long discourse. Our Lord said : 'Woman, the hour cometh and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth and the Father seeketh such.'

Taking the opening words : 'The hour cometh and now is.' He who would worship the Father must betake himself into eternity in his desires and hopes. There is one, the loftiest, part of the soul which stands above time and knows nothing of time or of body. The happenings of a thousand years ago, days spent millenniums since, are in eternity no further off than is this moment I am passing now ; the day to come a thousand years ahead or in

as many years as you can count, is no more distant in eternity than this very instant I am in.

He says, 'true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' What is truth? The truth is a most noble thing. If God were able to backslide from truth I would fain cling to truth and let God go. But God is truth, and things in time, the things that God created, are not truth.

He says, 'they worship the Father.' Alas, how many worship creatures and saddle themselves with them, fools that they are. As sure as thou dost pray to God for creatures thou prayest for thine own undoing, for no sooner is creature creature than hey for trouble and bitterness, wrong and distress. They get their deserts, do these folk, with their wrongs and their bitterness. For why? They prayed for it.

I have sometimes said, whoso goes seeking God and seeking aught with God does not find God; but he who seeks God by himself in truth does not find God alone: all God affords he finds as well as God. Art thou looking for God, seeking God with a view to thy personal good, thy personal profit? Then in truth thou art not seeking God. 'True worshippers worship the Father,' he says, and he says right well. If a virtuous man is asked, 'Why dost thou seek God?' he answers: 'Because he is God.'—'Why dost thou seek truth?'—'Because it is truth.'—'Why dost thou seek right?'—'Because it is right,' and with such all is well. Things here in time have each their cause. Ask a man why he eats? 'For strength,' he says. Why he sleeps? 'For the very same reason.' And so with everything in time. But ask a good man, 'Why dost thou love God?'—He says: 'I know not; for God's sake.'—'Why dost thou love the truth?'—'For the truth's sake.'—'Why dost thou love right?'—'For righteousness' sake.'—'Why dost thou love good?'—'For good's sake.'—'Why dost thou live?'—'I' faith, I know not! I like living.'

A philosopher says: 'He who has once been touched by truth, by right, by good, though it entailed the pangs of hell, that man could never turn therefrom, not for an instant.' The man, whoe'er he be, moved by these three—truth, righteousness and goodness—can no more quit these three than God can quit his Godhood.

A philosopher says that goodness has three branches. The first is use, the second is enjoyment and the third is seemliness. Concerning his words, 'they worship the Father.' Why does he say 'the Father'? Seek God alone and thou shalt find with God all that he gives. It is the positive truth, true of necessity, a written axiom though no less true unwritten, that if God had more

he could not keep it from thee, he would have to show it thee, to give it thee, and, as I sometimes say, he gives it to thee as a birth.

Philosophers say the soul is double-faced, her upper face gazes at God all the time and her lower face looks somewhat down, informing the senses; and the upper face, which is the summit of the soul, is in eternity and has nothing to do with time: it knows nothing of time or of body. Elsewhere I have explained how in this lies hid the fount as it were of all good, as a shining light that is always shining, a burning brand that is always burning, which brand is none other than the Holy Ghost.

Philosophers say that out of the summit of the soul there flow twin powers. The one is will, the other intellect, and her powers' perfection lies in the sovran power of intellect. This never rests. It wants God not as Holy Ghost nor yet as Son; it flees the Son. It wants God not as God. And why? Because thus he has name; were there a thousand Gods yet would it penetrate them all in the desire to get to where he has no name at all: it wants a nobler, better thing than God as having name. What would it, then? It does not know: it would have him Father. 'Lord, show us the Father,' Philip cries, 'and we shall be content.' It wants him as the quick of kindness; it wants him as the marrow dripping fatness; it wants him as the root, the main of goodness: thus he is simply Father.

Our Lord says: 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, nor the Son but the Father.' In truth, to know the Father we must be the Son. I have laid down these three maxims which take like three bad grapes and drink thereafter. First, if we are Son, we must have the Father: none can say he is a son unless he has a father, nor father unless he has a son. His father dead, he says; 'he was my father.' His son being dead, he says, 'he was my son.' The son's life hangs upon the father, and the father's on the son, and therefore none can say: 'I am the Son' unless he have the Father and he is in truth Son whose every work is wrought for love therein.—Secondly, that which most makes man Son is equability. Being sick he would as soon be sick as sane, as sane as sick. His friend dies, 'In God's name!' He has an eye out, 'In God's name!'—Thirdly, it beseems the Son to bow the head to no one save the Father. Truly, a royal power this, transcending time and without place! And by the fact of its transcending time it both contains all time and is the whole of time, and the least jot of that which transcends time makes a man rich indeed, for things at the antipodes are no more distant to this power than those present here. It is of these he says, 'the Father seeketh such.'

Look you, God loves us so, God importunes us so, because God

cannot work till the soul is shelled and trimmed of creatures, and the plain truth is that of necessity God is bound to cherish us just as though his Godhood were at stake, as in fact it is. God can no more do without us than we can without him, nay, even if we turned from God it would be impossible for God to turn his back on us. I vow I will not pray to God for gifts nor worship him because of gifts bestowed, but I will entreat him to make me worthy to receive and worship him for being of the essence and of the nature that must give. He who would spoil God of this would spoil him of his very life, of his very being. That we may thus in truth be Son, help us the truth of which I speak. Amen.

XII

CONTEMPLATION, HINTS AND PROMISES[1]

When a man delights to read or hear tell about God, that comes of divine grace and is lordly entertainment for the soul. To entertain God in one's thoughts is sweeter than honey, but to be sensible of God is teeming consolation to the noble soul, and union with God in love is everlasting joy which we relish here as we are fitted for it.

They are all too few who are fully ripe for gazing in God's magic mirror. Precious few succeed in living the contemplative life at all here upon earth. Many begin, but fail to consummate it. Because they have not rightly lived the life of Martha. As the eagle spurns its young that cannot gaze at the sun, even so fares it with the spiritual child.

He who would build high must lay firm and strong foundations. The true foundation is the very way and pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself declared: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'

Dionysius says, 'The soul shall follow God into the desert of his Godhead, so far as here the body follows Christ in outward willing poverty.'—'But that soul is idle.' To which St Bernard answers: 'Waiting upon God is not idleness but work which beats all other work to one unskilled in it.' In order to find God, we must seek him in his Godhead. Christ says, 'If father and mother or anything else be a hindrance, quit them for good and serve God unhindered.' The philosopher says, 'The soul which is moved by the power of the Prime Cause need seek no counsel from any human wisdom; he is obeying what transcends wisdom, for he is moved by the latent primitive truth.'

Though we meditate upon the blessed works of our Lord's poverty and his humility, yet coveting them not ourselves, the

[1] See Preger, *Zeitschr. f. hist. Theol.*, Bd. 36. 1866. (Two versions.)

thoughts are useless. And to covet them is useless too, unless we diligently seek how we may acquire them.

We would fain be humble ; but not despised. To be despised and rejected is the heritage of virtue. We would be poor too, but without privation. And doubtless we are patient, except with hardships and with disagreeables. And so with all the virtues.

The willing poor, unsolaced by corruptibles, descend into the valley of humility. They are pursued by insult and adversity, the best school of self-knowledge. And self-knowledge gets God-knowledge.

My children, ye who suffer insult, if the world reject you, do ye therewith likewise assail yourselves, helping to reject yourselves. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'The servant is not greater than his lord. If the world hate you, know ye it hated me before it hated you.'

We ought to recompense our Lord for all that he has done. There are plenty to follow our Lord half-way, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends and honours, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves.

Some there be, neither wanting nor looking for honours, yet, chancing to come their way, honours affect them.

St Bernard says : 'When a soul comes to wanting what few desire : to be nameless, outcast and disgraced, and makes all welcome equally, then she attains to peace and the true freedom needed for real vision in the mirror of divinity.'

Perfect rest is absolute freedom from motion. Our Lord says, 'Continue in my word and the truth shall make you free.' Freedom of soul consists in this : in finding in herself no sin ; in tolerating in herself no spiritual imperfection. She is more free lacking all hold on what possesses name and it on her. Freest of all when she transcends her selfhood and flows with all she is into the bottomless abyss of her primordial mould, into God himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ exhorts us to renounce all things that we may be less hindered. St Bernard declares : 'All the time thou occupiest not with God is accounted unto thee for lost.' And again, 'The most subtle temptation that can beset us is to occupy ourselves too much in outward works.' Further he says, 'The best preparation I know for heaven is having no home among externals.'

Our least interior act is higher and nobler than our grandest outward one, and yet our loftiest interior act halts in God's unveiled presence in the soul.

The very best work that we can do is to prepare for union with the present God and wait for this with fixed intention.

St Paul says, *Optimum esse unire deo* : Best of all is to be one

with God. In this union the soul is dead, not only to all outward but also to all inward ghostly acts. God operates unhindered, and the soul bears his godly operation to which she yields obediently enough for God to bring to birth his only Son in her no less than in himself. This is the atonement wherein, in the twinkling of an eye, the soul is made more one with God than by her doing any act, bodily or ghostly. The oftener this birth happens in the soul the closer grows her union with God.

God is born in the empty soul by discovering himself to her in a new guise without guise, without light in divine light.

St Augustine says, 'The soul being aflame with divine love, God is born in the soul, the Holy Ghost being the enkindler of love.'

God has vouchsafed divine light to the soul that he may blithely work in his own image.

Now no creature can do what is not in its power. Hence the soul cannot act above herself, not even with the bridal gift that God has given her in the shape of her most exalted faculty. This light, albeit divine, is still created. The creator is one and the light another. So God comes to the soul in love, purposing that love shall raise her to a higher power, to a function superior to her own. But love fails to tell unless she meets or makes her match. As far as God finds his likeness in the soul, so far is God in operation. If her love is boundless, God acts as boundless love.

A man might live a thousand years and go on growing all the time in love, just as fire will burn so long as there is wood. The bigger the fire and the stronger the wind, the more fiercely it burns. Now put love for the fire and the Holy Ghost for the wind: the greater the love and the stronger the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in grace, the quicker the work of perfection is achieved. Yet not suddenly, but by the gradual growth of the soul. It would not be well for the whole man to be consumed at once.

The soul becomes so one with God that grace confines her; she is not satisfied with grace, for grace is creaturely. The soul is so curiously glamoured, she does not realise that she exists: she fancies herself God, so utterly she has escaped from self. But be she never so far gone from self, she goes on being creature. Pouring a drop of water into a vat of wine does not destroy it. Seeing herself the soul sees spirit; seeing the angels she again sees spirit; but God is such pure spirit that soul and angel are nigh bodily compared with him. A portrait of the highest seraph limned in black would be a better likeness far than God portrayed as highest seraph: that were a pre-eminent unlikeness.

Now in the contemplative state we are consumed by fiery love in the Holy Ghost. Sooner than knowingly commit a sin, venial or mortal, we shall prefer to suffer every imaginable martyrdom.

If by one venial sin we were enabled to release from hell souls without number, we would not ransom them. Such love to God must a man have to be familiar with him in contemplation. Moreover, he must have a mind at ease; and in preparing for it, an undisturbed retired spot is necessary. The body should be rested from bodily labour, not only of the hands but of the tongue as well and all five senses. The soul keeps clear best in the quiet, but in jaded body is often overpowered by inertia. Then by strenuous effort we travail in divine love for intellectual vision till, clearing a way through recollected senses, we rise past our own mind to the wonderful wisdom of God, though this is quite beyond the grasp of any creature. We rise to divine heights. David says: *Accedat homo ad cor altum et exaltabitur deus*, that is, Man rising to the summit of his mind is exalted God. From this divine eminence we see the lowness and insignificance of creatures. We feel an inkling of the perfection and stability of eternity, for there is neither time nor space, neither before nor after, but everything present in one new, fresh-springing *now* where millenniums last no longer than the twinkling of an eye. And we win participation in the manifold delights of the heavenly host. So great the joy of Mary Queen in heaven, that having but a thousandth part of it, each member of the heavenly company would taste far more than ever they have earned. There every spirit rejoices in the joy of every other, relishing it each in his degree. Every celestial habitant is, knows and loves in God, in his own self and in every other spirit whether soul or angel. And the distinctive consciousness of one God in three Persons and the Three one God gives such ineffable, amazing satisfaction that all their passionate longing is fulfilled. And just what they are full of they crave unceasingly, and what they crave is all their own in new, fresh-springing joyful ecstasy, theirs to enjoy in all security from everlasting unto everlasting.

Thereafter we press on into the truth, into the simplicity God is himself, not seeking what is his. So we fall into peculiar wonder. In this wonder let us remain, for human wit is powerless to fathom it. Plumbing the deeps of divine wonder but stirs facile doubt.

XIII [1]

IN THIS WAS MANIFESTED THE LOVE OF GOD

In hoc apparuit charitas dei in nobis etc. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live with the Son,' that is,

[1] See also Wackernagel, No. lxv, p. 172.

'in and through the Son.' Those that live not through the Son, verily they err.

If a mighty king had a beautiful daughter and gave her to a poor man's son, every member of his family would rise in rank and become ennobled. Thus one learned doctor says: 'By God becoming man the whole human race has been ennobled and exalted; wherefore it behoves us to rejoice greatly that Christ our brother has with peculiar power ascended up above the choir of angels and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.' This is well said, though I set but little store by it. What profit to me that my brother is rich if I am poor, or wise and I a fool?

I say something more and more significant: God not only became man, he assumed human nature. Doctors agree that all men are of equal rank by nature. But I make bold to say that every good thing possessed by the saints and by Mary, God's mother, and Christ in his human nature, is also mine in this same nature. Haply thou wilt ask me: 'If already I possess in this nature all that Christ does in his humanity, how come we to set Christ so high and honour him as our Lord and God?'—Because he was a messenger from God to us, bringing us our happiness. The happiness he brought us was our own. When the Father begets his Son in the innermost ground, what moves there has this nature. This same nature is one and indivisible. Anything distinct in it or connected with it is not this one.

Another thing I say, still harder. To subsist immediately in this pure nature a man must be so wholly dead to person that he wills as well to one across the seas whom his eyes have never seen as to his own present and familiar friend. While thou still wishest better to thine own person than to that man whom thou hast never seen thou art beside the mark, nor hast thou even for an instant seen into this simple ground. Haply in some far-fetched symbol thou hast beheld the truth as in an image, but it was not the best. —Secondly, thou must be pure in heart; and only that heart is pure which has exterminated creaturehood. And thirdly, thou must be free from *not*.

It is a question, what burns in hell? Doctors reply with one accord: 'self-will.' But I maintain: *not* burns in hell. A simile! Suppose I take a burning coal and put it on my hand; then if I say the coal is burning me, I do it great injustice. To define precisely what it is that burns me: *not* does; because the coal has in it something my hand has not. Observe, it is this very *not* that burns me. Did my hand contain what the coal is and can afford, it would possess the fire-nature altogether. In which case all the fire that ever burned might be taken and heaped upon my hand without its burning me. Likewise, I aver that

because God and those who are in sight of God, have in them something pertaining to real happiness which those who are apart from God have not, therefore this *not* alone torments the souls in hell more than the personal will or any fire soever. In sooth I hold: as far as *not* inheres in thee, so far thou art imperfect. To be perfect, then, thou must be free from *not*.

Further, my text says: 'God sent his only-begotten Son into the world,' by which ye are to understand not the external world: it must be taken of the inner world. As surely as the Father by his simple nature begets the Son innately, so surely he begets him in the innermost recesses of the mind, which is the inner world. Here God's ground is my ground and my ground God's ground. Here I live in my own as God lives in his own. To one who even for an instant has seen into this ground, a thousand ducats of red beaten gold are worth no more than a false farthing. Out of this innermost ground thy works should be wrought without why. Indeed, I hold that as long as thou doest thy works because of the kingdom of heaven, or God, or thine own eternal happiness, from without (that is to say), all is not well with thee. It may be tolerable but it is not the best. He who fondly imagines to get more of God in thoughts, prayers, pious offices and so forth, than by the fireside or in the stall: in sooth he does but take God, as it were, and swaddle his head in a cloak and hide him under the table. For he who seeks God under settled forms lays hold of the form while missing the God concealed in it. But he who seeks God in no special guise lays hold of him as he is in himself, and such an one 'lives with the Son' and is the life itself. We might question life for a thousand years: 'Why dost thou live!' It would only say, if it replied at all, 'I live because I live.' For life lives in a ground of its own, wells up out of its own. It lives without a cause for it lives itself. And if anyone asked a proper man, one who works his own ground, 'Why dost thou work?' he too would say, if he told the truth: 'I work because I work.'

Where creature stops, there God begins. All God wants of thee is for thee to go out of thyself in respect of thy creatureliness and let God be God in thee. The smallest of creaturely images that ever takes shape in thee is as big as God.—'How so?'

—It shuts out the whole of God. As soon as this image appears God disappears with all his Godhood. As this image fades out God comes in. [No temporal image is so godly but thrice harms the soul. First, it vexes spirituality; next, it tarnishes her purity; and thirdly, it disturbs detachment.

—'What does God do to my mind?'

—Transcend thyself and repress creatures: God does that to thy mind.]

God longs as urgently for thee to go out of thyself in respect of thy creaturely nature as though his whole felicity depended on it. Why, man, what is the harm of letting God be God in thee ? Go clean out of thy self for God's sake, and God will go clean out of his for thy sake. Both being gone out, what remains is simply the one. In this one the Father gives birth to his Son, in his innermost source. Thence blossoms forth the Holy Ghost and thence originates in God the will belonging to the soul. The while this will remains unmoved by creatures and by creaturehood, the will is free. Christ says : ' None goes to heaven but he who came from heaven.' Things are all made from nothing ; hence their true source is nothing. This noble will, as far as it inclines to creatures, with them elapses into nothing.

The question is, Does the will lapse so far that it is never able to return ? Doctors reply with one accord that it does not return so far as it has lapsed with time. But I maintain that if this will turns back, even for an instant, from its own self and things created and rallies to its source, there in its own free origin the will is free and in this instant time lost is all recovered.

People often say to me : ' Pray for me.' And I think to myself : Why ever do ye go out ? Why not stop at home and mine your own treasure ? For indeed the whole truth is native in you.

May we be apt to stay thus in ourselves and to possess the entire truth immediately, impartibly, in real happiness. So help us God ! Amen.

XIV

LIKE A VASE OF GOLD

Quasi vas auri solidum ornatum omni lapide pretioso (*Eccl.* 50_{10}). My quotation will apply to St Augustine or to any virtuous soul, such being likened to ' a golden vessel, massive and firm, adorned with every precious stone.' Because of the perfection of the saints we have no likeness to express them, and we therefore symbolise them by the trees, the sun, or moon. So here St Augustine is compared with a chalice of gold, solid and firm, all set with precious stones. Indeed the same thing may be said of any saintly virtuous soul who, leaving all things here, enjoys them yonder where they are eternal. Whoso renounces things in their contingent sense possesses them as absolute and eternal.

Every cup has two things : it receives and holds. The spiritual vessel differs from the physical. The wine is in the cup, not the cup in the wine, though the wine is not in the cup as it is in the body ; if it were in the cup as it is in the body we should not be able to drink it. It is different with the spiritual vessel. Every-

thing received in this is in the cup and the cup in it and is the cup itself. All this ghostly cup receives is its own nature. It is God's nature to give himself to every virtuous soul, and it is the soul's nature to receive God, and this we say referring to the soul in her loftiest capacity. There the soul bears the image of God and is godlike. No image can be without likeness, but likeness can be without image. Two eggs may be both alike white, but one is not the image of the other: for one to be the image of the other it must proceed out of its nature and be born of it and be like it.

An image has two properties. First, it receives its being from the thing whose image it is, immediately and above will, for it is a natural product, sprouting out of its nature as a branch does out of a tree. Any face thrown on a mirror is, willy-nilly, imaged therein. But its nature does not appear in its looking-glass image: only the mouth, nose and eyes, just the features, are seen in the mirror. God reserves it to himself to display in his reflections, at once his nature, all he is and all he can, and this above his will. His image is prior to his will, will following the image, for out of his nature there leaps first his image, focussing into itself the whole promise of his nature and his essence, all his nature pouring out into his image the while it abides intact within itself. Now the masters locate this image not in the Holy Ghost but in the middle Person, for the Son, being the earliest issue of his nature, is therefore called his Father's express image, and not the Holy Ghost: he is simply the flowering of the Father and the Son, and has one nature with them both. Will is not a mean between the nature and the image, nor, for that matter, can knowledge or perception, nay, nor wisdom, come between, for this image of God is the immediate product of his fecund nature. If there is means of wisdom here it is the image itself. Thus the Son in the Godhead is called the Wisdom of the Father.

Know, this impartible image of God which is stamped in the soul is sealed direct in her innermost nature; this most fundamental, most noble part of her nature, is really what takes this soul-pattern, and that not by means either of will or of wisdom. As I remarked just now, if wisdom comes in here at all it is (as) the pattern itself. God exists in this image without any means and the image subsists without means in God. But God is much more noble in the image than the image is in God. The image receives God not as being the creator; it conceives him in the guise of understanding, the summit of her nature actually taking on his form. This is the innate divine image which God has stamped in every soul by nature. I durst not give more to this image: to give it more would make it God himself, which it is not, or God would not be God.

The second characteristic of an image we note in its likeness to its object. And here observe especially two things. First: an image is not itself, neither is it its own. So an image received into the eye is not the eye itself nor has it any real existence in the eye but is merely suspended from and tethered to the thing it is the image of, whereto it entirely belongs and wherefrom it gets its being and is being that same being. Note well my definition of an image. There are four points to bear in mind, and haply others will occur to you. An image is not itself, neither is it its own: it is solely that thing's whose reflection it is, and it is due to this alone that it exists at all. Things apart from the thing whose image it is, it is not and does not belong to. The image takes its being direct from the thing whose image it is, having one nature therewith and being the very same being. This is not a subject for discussion in the schools, though one may well propound it from the professorial chair.

Ye are always asking how ye ought to live. Lay then to heart this answer: Just as the image is here said to do, even so it behoves thee to live. Be his and belonging to him, not thine own and belonging to thyself nor withal to anyone. Whoever has a well-beloved friend holds his belongings dear and anything against his friend he will object to. Take, for example, the dog, an irrational beast. So faithful is he to his master that he resents the things his master hates, while to his master's friends he is most friendly. No count takes he of poverty or wealth; were some blind beggar his master's bosom friend, he would be more affectionate to him than to the king or emperor who was his master's enemy. I trow if it were possible the dog should be half faithless to his master, its other half were bound to hate itself. But then some folks complain of having no interior life, no devotion, no sweetness nor any suchlike godly consolation. Marry, these folk are all unrighteous still, and though they suffer it is not the best. Verily I say, as long as any image forms in thee which is not the eternal Word nor any shadowing forth of the eternal Word, be it never so good, in sooth it is wrong. That man alone is righteous who, having naughted all created things, stands facing straight along the unswerving line into the eternal Word, where, in *the right*, he is idealised and transformed. That man is gotten where the Son is gotten and is the Son himself.

According to the scriptures, 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son,' and hence, if ye desire to know God, ye have to be not merely like the Son, ye have to be the very Son himself. Some people think to see God with their eyes as they would see a cow, and they expect to love him as they would love a cow. This thou lovest for its milk and for its cheese: for its profit to thyself.

Even so do they who love God with an eye to outward riches or interior consolation, not rightly loving God but their own personal advantage. I trow that any object thou shalt set before thy mind, except God in himself, how good soever it may be, is nothing but a barrier to the absolute truth. As I said just now that St Augustine is compared to a golden cup, closed on the underside and open to the sky, even so it behoves thee to be : if thou wouldst stand with St Augustine and in the communion of saints, then close thy heart to everything created and be open to God as he is in himself.

Men are compared with the higher faculties because they always go bareheaded, and women with the lower because the head is always veiled. The superior powers transcend time and space, springing straight out of the essence of the soul, and they resemble men in always going uncovered. Accordingly, their working is eternal. The philosopher says that all the powers of the soul, inasmuch as time and space affect them, have lost their virgin purity and can never be so thoroughly abstracted nor so finely sifted as to pass into the higher faculties. Albeit they are stamped with the same image.

Do thou be ' firm and steady,' the same, that is to say, in weal and woe, in fortune and misfortune ; and ' set with all the precious stones,' a treasury, to wit, of all the virtues which come naturally pouring out of thee. Traverse all the virtues and, transcending them, tap virtue only at its source, where it is one with the divine nature. And in so far as thou art more atoned than are the angels with God's nature, to that extent they must receive through thee. May we be one, So help us God. Amen.

XV

THE DIVINE BEING[1]

No man can tell of God exactly what he is. According to St Dionysius, God is not anything we can say or think. St Augustine cries : ' I who have ever been in God and ever more shall be, would sooner I had never been and never more should be than that we found a single word that we could say of God. Were we compelled to speak of God, in that case I should say : Verily, in no sense is God comprehensible nor yet attainable. God is what thought cannot better.' Nay, I declare God beggars human thought ; he transcends all human conception. No man knows what God is. Aught that a man could or would think of God, God is not at all. It is the nature of the soul not to be satisfied except

[1] See Spamer's *Texte*, B. 1.

with God. But all that heart can desire is small, is insignificant compared with God. Yet man's thought may be never so rich or so rare but his desire outstrips it. So he transcends man's desire as well as transcending human thought.

St Dionysius says, God is naught. Meaning that God is as incomprehensible as naught. St Bernard says, I know not what God is ; but what I know not that he is that same is he. A heathen philosopher maintains that what we know of the First Cause is rather what we are ourselves than what the First Cause is. For that passes understanding. And in this strain the heathen doctor argues in his book, *The Light of Lights*, that God is super-essential, super-rational, super-intelligible, *i.e.* beyond the natural understanding. I speak not of gracious understanding. By grace man may be carried to the length of understanding as St Paul understood who was caught up into the third heaven and saw unspeakable things. He saw, but was not able to express them. For what a man knows he knows in its cause or in its mode or in its effect. But in these respects God remains unknown, for he is the first. Further, he is modeless, *i.e.* undetermined. And he is without effect, that is, in his mysterious stillness. Here he abides apart from the names that are given him. Moses asked his name. God answered, He-who-is hath sent thee. Otherwise he could not tell it. God as simply being, in that sense he could never give himself to be known to creatures. Not that he could not do it, but creature could not understand it.—I have often laid it down that God's lordship does not lie merely in his lordship over creature ; his lordship consists in his power to create a thousand worlds and dominate them all in his abstract essence. Therein lies his lordship. Dionysius and Gregory both teach that the divine being is not comprehensible in any sense : not to any wit nor any understanding, not even to angelic understanding. Its simplicity and triplicity is a thing not to be grasped by the human mind even at its best, nor by the angelic mind even at its clearest. It was said by a philosopher that whoso knows of God that he is unknown, that man knows God. For it is the height of gnosis and perception to know and understand in agnosia and a-perception. To know him really is to know him as unknowable. As the master puts it : If I must speak of God, then I will say, God is something which is in no sense to be reached or grasped ; and I know nothing else about him. According to St Augustine, what we say about God is not true ; what we say that God is he is not ; what we say he is not that he is rather than what we say that he is. Nothing we can say of God is true. God's worth and God's perfection cannot be put into words. When I say *man*, I have in my mind human nature. When I say *grey*, I have in my mind

the greyness of grey. When I say *God*, I have in my mind neither God's majesty nor his perfection. Dionysius insists that the more we can abstract from God the better we shall see him. God is such that we apprehend him better by negation than by affirmation. Hence the dictum of one master that to argue about God from likeness is to argue falsely about him, but to argue by denials is to argue about him correctly. Dionysius says, writing about God, He is super-essential, he is super-luminous; he attributes to him neither this nor that. For whatever he conceives, God far transcends it. There is no knowing him by likeness. Rather by attributing unlikeness may we make some approach to understanding him. Take an illustration. Supposing I describe a ship to someone who has never seen one, then on looking at a stone he will plainly see that it is not a ship. And the plainer he sees that it is not ship-like, the more he will know about a ship. It is the same with God. The more we can impute to him not-likeness, the nearer do we get to understanding him. Holy Scripture yields us merely privatives. That we should credit God with matter, form and work is due to our gross senses. We fail to find God one because we try to come at him by likeness. Dionysius cries, 'Friend Timothy, if thou wouldst catch the spirit of truth pursue it not with the human senses. It is so swift, it comes rushing.' God is to be sought in opposites; in unknowing knowing shall we know God; in forgetfulness of ourselves and all things even to the naked essence of the Godhead. Dionysius was exhorting one of his disciples. Friend,' quoth he, 'cease from all activity and empty thyself of self that thou mayst commune with the Sovran Good, God namely.' Pray God we may seek him so that we shall find him nevermore to lose him. Amen.

XVI

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE

Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam (*Matt.* 5_6). Jesus went up a mountain to a valley, into a field, and power went out of him preaching to the multitude: 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.'

Methinks this text is apt to my discourse. Blessed are they that hunger for righteousness and endure work and poverty here, for this is but a moment and will surely pass. They are blessed though not most blessed. Blessed are they that hunger not to be deprived of God, albeit the wonder is that man can be without him without whom he cannot be. St Augustine says it is amazing that anyone should live apart from him apart from whom he cannot

live at all. They are blessed and yet not most blessed. More blessed those who so hunger that they cannot live without God; that is a fiery affection which transforms their nature. The while a man yet finds in his desire or in his hope or his affection anything impermanent, he is not most blessed. He is blessed but not most blessed. Blessed, supremely blessed, are they who are installed in the eternal now, transcending time and place and form and matter, unmoved by weal or woe or wealth or want, for in so far as things are motionless they are like eternity.

[The heaven adjoining the eternal now, wherein the angels are, is motionless, immoveable. But the heaven next to that which touches the eternal now, wherein the angels are, and betwixt (that and) the heaven where the sun is, is set in motion by angelic force, revolving once in every hundred years. The heaven the sun is in, moved by angelic force, goes round once a year. The heaven the moon is in, again, is driven by angelic force and goes round once a month. The nearer the eternal now the more immoveable they are, and the further off and more unlike to the eternal now the easier to move. The heaven of the sun and moon and stars is moved by the impulse of their angel, so that they are spinning in this temporal now; and the eternal now imparts their motion, that being so energetic that from the motion the eternal now imparts, all things derive their life and being. Now the lowest powers of the soul are nobler than the highest part of heaven, where it adjoins the angels and the eternal now. Moreover, all things get their life and being from the motion there imparted by the eternal now; and if that is so noble, then what would ye expect where the soul in her superior powers contacts the ground of God? How exalted, think ye, that must be?—Follow then after this now, and reach this now and possess this eternal now. May we stand next the eternal now and so be in possession of it. So help us O divine power.]

[One master says: Grace springs from the heart of the Father and flows into his Son and in the oneness of them twain it proceeds from the Wisdom of the Son into the Gift of the Holy Ghost and in the Holy Ghost is sent into the soul. Grace is the face of God which is clearly stamped in the soul without any means by the Spirit of God, giving the soul the form of God. St Dionysius says: The angels are the divine mind. Moreover St Paul declares concerning those who live the angelic life here in the flesh, that into them there flows the mind of God as it does into the angels. He also says the intellectual light, God namely, has given likeness to the rational soul. Quoth St Paul: He who cleaves unto God with his whole being becomes one spirit with God. So help us God. Amen.]

XVII

IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM

In principio erat verbum (*Joh.* 1_1). Theologians talk of the eternal Word. God never spoke but one word, and that is still unspoken. The explanation is this. The eternal Word is the logos of the Father which is his only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In him he pronounces all creatures without beginning and without end. This accounts for the Word remaining unborn, for it never came out of the Father. This Word is to be known in fourfold guise.

First, on the altar in the priest's hands. There it is ours to know and love the eternal Word as we, in his eternal Word, appear to the heavenly Father. Secondly, we know the eternal Word as expounded by doctors from the chair. We receive it in their person; like water flowing in a channel, so does the eternal Word flow through its teachers. We should pay no heed to any shortcomings in the doctor: we must fix our gaze on the eternal Word in him, as it comes pouring eternally out of the ground of itself. Thirdly, we can recognise the eternal Word in our Lord's friends who, having followed this eternal Word, have gotten proof of it in life eternal, and also those that follow it in time, such, namely, as are quick in our Lord Jesus Christ. Fourthly, we have the eternal Word as spoken in the virgin soul by God himself; wordlessly, to wit, since the soul is not able to express him.

I would have you know that the eternal Word is being born within the soul, its very self, no less, unceasingly. I tell you, the soul knows the eternal Word better than all the doctors can expound it. What we can express is all too little, so for the nonce she is bearing the eternal Word in mind. According to the masters we ought by rights to go to school where the Holy Ghost is teacher; and know, where he is teacher and is bound to be, there he finds students properly equipped to profit by his lofty teaching which issues from out the Father's heart. So the soul has, if she will, the Father and the Son and Holy Ghost: she goes flowing into *the one* where naked in naked is revealed to her. Our masters say that no one can attain to this so long as he retains of nether things as much as a needle-point can carry. Into the naked Godhead none may get except he be as naked as he was when he was spilt from God.

The masters say, giving us wise counsel, that leaving God his glory we ought to get all things direct from him and not from creatures. We shall leave God his glory by leaving him to work just how he will and when he will, we staying idle and free. For

we must see that God does all for the best. And so I trow it lies with us, so far as it is in us, to help God to preserve his glory.

A master says, Little recks the king of those of his retainers who perform the drudgery. He notices the ones about his privy chambers and gratifies their every want. God does the same with his chosen friends, the intimates of his mysterious privacy: he never turns a deaf ear to their prayer. Withal the masters do affirm that numbers go to heaven who know no more of God on earth than, as it were, of sun in forest gloom. Desiring this supremely it rests with us to compass it by practice and by strength of will. Amen.

XVIII

I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST

Scio hominem in Christo ante annos quatuordecim etc. (*2 Cor.* 12_2). St Paul declares: 'I know a man who fourteen years ago was caught up into the third heaven; whether in the body or no I cannot tell: God knoweth.' Now granting Paul was there at any time, then either body and soul both turned to spirit or else his soul took wing out of his body. It is certain that his soul left not his body, for she was giving life unto his body; she must then have seen God in her and herself in him.

The soul has three powers: mind, will and rage. These three powers are in league with deity. Will cleaving unto God can do all things. God seized of his divinity bestows upon her power and fecundity. Mind cleaving to the Son knows with the Son; it knows with the Son when it is void of knowledge. The third power is the power of attack, which is connected with the Holy Ghost. This power is ever making for the source whence it proceeded forth and the Holy Ghost is its initiator into the eternal nature: it floods the secret chamber of the soul, and lo! she loses time and place in the eternal, in time transcending time. But for the soul this is not enough: had she enough she would have time in lieu of her eternity. Let us not flag. Not ours the blame if, being ready and atoned in will, God hides himself so that we cannot do all things with him although he plays his part just as the sun gives out its light and fire gives out its heat. Woodapples cannot check the letting of their gall, but God contrives from time to time to reach out to the longing soul if he is very near to her. So let her, never doubting, with hearty longing, hail God frequently: 'O Friend of me, how long am I to wait for thee?'

He says, to Christ was given a new name: one by the angel, another by St Paul, a third by his heavenly Father. The angel gave him the name Jesus Christ. Joseph and Mary called him by

this name which signifies Weal of the World. The name is given to the wounded soul. Alas, we are too frail! We should be well of our infirmities being raised up and gotten in; we should be raised if we were destitute and unattached. For the exalted spark wherein we see the light divine, that never parts from God nor is there anything between. What matter then if good and ill and pain betide, they do but touch the lower faculties.

St Paul gave him three names and called him the reflection of the Father. He says, the wounded soul is given the mystic heavenly bread. Whence comes her wound?—From longing. What is longing?—It is love. What is nobler than longing? What we pray God for humbly and with longing he durst not refuse: desire ablush with modesty he leads into the triple chamber of the Holy Trinity.

Paul called him also the fecundity of the Father and the image in the Father, working with the Father to bring forth his Person. Verily I say, the soul will bring forth Person if God laughs into her and she laughs back to him. To speak in parable, the Father laughs into the Son and the Son laughs back to the Father; and this laughter breeds liking, and liking breeds joy, and joy begets love, and love begets Person, and Person begets the Holy Ghost. In this wise does he travail with his Father.

The third name he gave was, The Majesty of the Substance of God. Majesty is the essence of his divine substance, this substance being the elemental matter of the three Persons. The soul is called majesty when she gives up mode: then she knows the Father and paternity, the Son and filiation, and the Persons of them twain she comprehends in unity. The Father gave him five names, ineffable. God keep us every whit in him. So help us God. Amen.

XIX

PAUL ROSE FROM THE GROUND

Surrexit autem Saulus de terra apertisque occulis nihil videbat (*Act.* 9_3). This statement which I quote in Latin is made in St Luke's narrative about St Paul. It records that 'Paul rose from the ground with open eyes and seeing nothing.' The words are open to four interpretations. One is, that when he rose up from the ground he was gazing wide-eyed at naught, that naught being God, for the vision of God he would describe as the naught. Another explanation is that when he got up he saw nothing but God. The third, he saw naught but God in all things. The fourth, that in the divine vision he beheld all things as a naught. He previously tells how light came suddenly from heaven and felled

him to the ground. Mark you, he says that the light came from heaven. According to our doctors, though heaven is fraught with light it does not shine. The sun is full of light and shines withal. Our doctors teach that fire does not give any light in the simple, natural perfection of its highest state. Its nature is too pure for eye in any wise to see. So subtle is it, so unlike the eye, that were it here below within our view it could not stimulate our eyes to sight. And yet, forsooth, we see it is absorbed by different things, such as a lump of coal, a piece of wood.

By the light of heaven we see the light that is God whereto no mind of man is able to attain. As St Paul hath it: 'God dwells in a light that no man can approach unto.' He says, 'God is light inaccessible.' There is no admittance to God. No man still on the ascent, still on the increase in grace and in light, has ever yet got into God. God is no crescent light: we get to him by growing. In the growing process God is unseen. When God is seen it is in the light that is God himself. A master says, In God there is no more nor less nor this nor that. Whiles we are on the way we are not there.

He says, 'A light from heaven shone round about him.' Implying the capture of his entire soul. A master says that in this light all the soul-powers are exalted and raised to a higher power, the outward senses we see and hear with as well as the inner senses we call thoughts: the reach of these and their profundity are most amazing. I can think as easily about things overseas as close at hand. Above thought comes the intellect, as seeker. She goes about looking, casting her net here and there, gaining and losing. Above intellect the seeker there is another intellect which does not seek but rests in its pure and simple essence in the realm of light. And I say it is in this light that all the soul-powers are exalted. Senses rise to thoughts. How high, how fathomless these are, that no one knows except God and the soul.

Our theologians teach, and it is a knotty question, that angels know nothing about thoughts unless the thoughts take wing and rise up into intellect—intellect the seeker; and this intellect, the seeker, soars up into the intellect which does not seek, which is the pure light in itself. This light embraces all the powers of the soul. Accordingly he says, 'The heavenly light encircled him.'

One master lays it down that anything which has an emanation is exempt from these lower things. God emanates into all creatures without being affected by any. He does not need them. God energises nature and her first work is the heart. Wherefore some doctors would pretend the soul is altogether in the heart and flows thereout as life into the other members. Not so. The

soul is in each member, whole. True, her chief work is in the heart. The heart being in the middle gets protection on all sides, just as heaven is protected from outside influence and intrusion. It contains all things. It moves all things and itself remains unmoved. Not even fire, exalted though it be in its most high estate, can lick the heavens.

'In the encircling light he fell to earth, and his eyes being unsealed he, open-eyed, beheld all things as naught.' And beholding all things as naught he was beholding God. Mark here what the soul says in the Book of Love: 'By night in my bed I sought him my soul loveth: I sought him and I found him not.' She sought him in her bed: meaning to convey that anyone cleaving to aught below God has too narrow a lie. God's entire creation is all too confined. Quoth she, 'I sought him all night through.' There is no night without the light: only, it is veiled. The sun is shining in the night albeit screened from view. By day it shines, eclipsing all the other lights. So does the light of God; it blinds and puts out any light. Our creaturely expectations, all these are night. What I mean to say is, that nothing we find in a creature is more than a shadow and dark. Even the highest angel's light, exalted though it be, illumines not the soul. All but the first light is darkness, is night. By it she cannot find God. 'I rose and sought him all about, I scoured the broadways and the alleys. The watchmen (angels) found me, and I questioned them, "Saw ye not him whom my soul loveth?"' But they answered not; peradventure they could not apprehend him. 'It was but a little that I passed and I found him my soul loveth.' The little, the trifle, that she missed him by has often been the burden of my teaching. He to whom mortal things are not all trivial and as naught withal, that man shall not find God. 'Having passed by a little,' she says, 'I found him whom I sought.' When God pours into and informs the soul and thou takest him as a light or a state or a boon, whatsoever thou knowest about him, that God is not. We have to transcend the little, discard the adventitious and perceive God one. She says, 'When I had passed by a little I found him my soul loveth.'

We are very fond of saying, 'him my soul loveth.' But he is far away above the soul, nor does she name her love. There are five reasons why she names him not. One is that God is nameless. Any name she gave him would have to be well chosen. God is beyond all name, none can express him. A second reason is that on swooning away into God for love, the soul is conscious of nothing but love. She fondly imagines that everyone knows him like that. She is amazed that any wight should find him aught but love alone. Thirdly, she has no time to name him. Love

does not leave her any time to use another word. Fourthly, perchance she weens he has no other name than love. In love she pronounces all names. Quoth she, 'I rose up, I went through the broad streets and the alleys. And when I had passed a little I found him my soul loveth.'

'Paul rose from the ground wide-eyed, beholding nothing.' I cannot see what is one. He saw nothing, to wit, God. God is naught and God is one. What aught is is naught as well. What God is is he altogether. As Dionysius says about the light: speaking of God he says, He is supernatural, supervital, superluminous; he will allow him neither this nor that, but makes him out to be I know not what that far transcends them. Aught seen, aught that may come within thy ken, that God is not; for why, God is not this nor that. Whoever says that God is here or there, credit him not. The light which God is shines in darkness. God is the true light: to see it one has to be blind and strip God naked of things. A master says, To argue about God from any sort of likeness is to argue falsely about him. But to argue about God from naught is to argue soundly withal. When the soul is reduced to one and is gotten therein by discarding herself altogether, there she finds God, as it were, in a naught. It appeared to one soul as in a dream (it was a waking dream), to be big with naught like a woman with child, and in this naught God was born, the fruits of the naught. God was born in the naught. Therefore he says, 'He arose from the earth wide-eyed, gazing at naught.' He had a vision of God where there are no creatures. He beheld all creatures as naught for he had the whole essence of creatures in him. He is the all-containing essence.

Another thing he means by saying, 'he saw naught.' According to our masters, any perception of externals entails some inroad by them, an impression at the least. To get some idea of a thing, a stone, for instance, I do (not) take into my mind the grossest part of it; that I leave outside. As it exists in the ground of my soul where it is at its noblest and best, it is merely a type (or idea). Things perceived by my soul from without contain an outside element: my perception of creature in God contains nothing but God alone, for in God there is nothing but God. When I see all creatures I see not. He saw God where creatures are not.

In the third place, why he saw naught. Naught was God. A master says, Creatures in God are as naught for he has in him the whole essence of creatures. He is the being that contains all beings. The master says, Nothing inferior to God, however nigh it might be to him, but has some alien taint. The master says an angel knows himself and God without means. Into other things he knows there comes an outside element, some interference still,

however slight. If we are to know God it must be without means, nothing foreign can come in between. When we do see God in his light it happens in private, safe from the slightest intrusion of creaturely things. Then we have immediate knowledge of eternal life.

'Seeing nothing, he saw God.' The light which is God is flowing and darkening every light. Concerning it Job says, 'He commanded the sun not to shine and sealeth up the stars as it were with a seal.' Enveloped in this light he could see naught beside; his whole soul was distraught, intent upon the light that is God to the exclusion of all else; and this is a lesson to us, for what time we are busy with God we mind little what goes on without.

Fourthly, he saw naught since the light which is God is unmingled, free from admixture. It shows it was the true light he beheld for there was nothing there. By light he simply means that he saw nothing with his open eyes. In that he saw not, he saw the divine naught. St Augustine says, When he saw nothing, he saw God. According to St Paul, 'Whoso only seeth being blind, he seeth God.' As St Augustine hath it, 'God is the true light, preserver of the soul, more nigh to her than she is to herself, and by the same token, when the soul turns her back on things becoming, then God must needs shine into her. This soul knows neither love nor care, she is unmindful of them. The soul that fares not forth to outside things comes home to stay in her impartible pure light. She does not love nor does she fear nor care withal. Knowledge is the basis, the foundation of all being. Love has no hold except in knowledge. When the soul is blind and can see naught beside, then she sees God, it is inevitable. A master says, the eye at its clearest, without any colour, sees every colour; not just as a colourless thing in itself, but in place in the body it has to be void of all colour for us to see colours. In colourless things all colours are seen, aye, though it be down in one's feet. God is something all-embracing. For God to be seen by the soul she has to be blind. Accordingly he says, 'He saw the naught whose light all lights are, whose being all beings are.' The bride says in the Book of Love: 'When I had passed by a little I found him my soul loveth.' The little she had passed all creatures were. Whoso putteth not these behind him shall not find God. And eke she would imply that however small, however pure a thing I know God by, yet it must go. Even the light that verily is God, if I take it where it plays upon my soul is foreign to him. I must take it at the source. I cannot really see the light that shines upon the wall unless I turn my gaze to where it comes from. But if I take it in its cause I am robbed of its effect. I ought to take it neither where it falls nor in its eruption nor yet

as brooding in itself; these are all mere modes. We must take God in modeless mode and unconditioned essence, for he is free from mode. St Bernard says: He who would know thee, God, must mete thee with no measure. Please God we may attain that understanding which is wholly without mode and without measure. So help us God. Amen.

XX

AND BEHOLD THERE WAS A MAN . . . SIMEON

Et ecce, homo erat in Jerusalem, cui nomen Simeon etc. (*Luc.* 2_{25}). St Luke relates in his gospel that 'when the days were accomplished Christ was brought to the temple. And behold there was a man in Jerusalem, Simeon by name, who was just and God-fearing, waiting for the consolation of the people of Israel and the Holy Ghost was in him.'

'And behold.' This particle *et* in Latin signifies joining, binding or locking together. Things fast bound or locked together are described as in union. Here I refer to the soul being bound, knit, united to God. According to our doctors, union postulates likeness. There is no union without likeness. Binding or knitting together, that is the meaning of union. Nearness to me does not constitute likeness: my sitting by someone or in the same place, for example. As St Augustine says, Lord, when I found myself afar from thee it was not from the remoteness of the place, it came of thy unlikeness wherein I found myself. One master says, people living and working wholly in time never agree, they never come together. According to our doctors, a thing whose life and work is in eternity and a thing whose life and work is here in time require a go-between. Where there is knitting and binding together there must be some likeness. The union of God and the soul is a matter of likeness. Where no difference exists there must be identity; not merely union in mutual embrace, but one; not merely likeness, but the same. Wherefore we say that the Son is not like the Father but he is his image, he is one with the Father.

One of our best doctors says that an image in stone or on the wall, with no foundation to it, taken simply as a form, is the same form as his whose form it is. For the soul passing into her exemplar wherein is no alien thing, only her form wherewith it is one, this doctrine holds good. Having gotten the form that is divine we behold God, we find God. In separation God is not found. On passing into her exemplar and finding herself in that image alone, in that same image the soul finds God and the finding of herself and God, which is all the same act and is timeless, is the finding of God. So far as she is therein so far she is one with God. He means:

as far as a man is at the stage where his soul is the divine image. Then so far as he is he is divine. So far therein so far in God, not annexed, not united but one and the same.

One master says, likeness means birth. Further he states that like is not met with in nature unless it is born. Doctors declare that fire, however fierce, would never burn had it no hope of propagation. However dry the wood supplied it would never catch (if fire) lacked power to generate its kind. What fire wants is to be born in wood, for all to be one fire, living and lasting. Extinguished and dead it were fire no more, so it wants to keep in. The nature of the soul would never have gotten its kind were it not for her wanting to have God begotten in her; she would not have proceeded into her nature, would never have wanted to enter therein, except in the hope of this birth; nor would God ever have brought it to pass had he not meant the soul to be born into him. God does and the soul desires. God has the energy and the soul has the will and the power to have God born into her and herself into God. This God contrives with intent that the soul shall be like him. She must needs wait for God to be gotten in her and for her treasure to grow into God, desiring union and the safe-keeping of God. God's nature pours into the light of the soul and therein she is preserved. God purposes thus to be born into her, united with her, contained in her.—How can that be? Do we not say that God contains himself?—When he draws in the soul she finds that God is self-contained and there she stays abiding nowhere else. Augustine says: 'As thou lovest so thou art: loving earth thou art earthly, loving God thou shalt be divine.' If I love God then, shall I be God? It is not I who say so; search the scriptures. In the Prophets God says: 'Ye are gods and the children of the Most High.' I say that it is in his likes that God gives this birth. Had she no expectation of this the soul would not want to attain it. She wants to be preserved in him, he is her life. God has a preserve, a safe place in himself, which man can know nothing about until he pares off and is rid of all that belongs to the soul—her life, her powers, her nature, all must go. And that means standing in that perfect light where she and God are one form, where she finds herself God. It is characteristic of God to have nothing alien in him, nor on him nor added to him. And likewise it behoves the soul to have no outside impressions, nothing put on, nothing annexed. So much for the first (word).

'And behold': *ecce*. This word *ecce* has all the meaning of logos (or word) and it could be given no greater. Word, *i.e.* God. God is a word, God's Son is a word. It conveys the idea of our life and all our desire being centred in and dependent upon and oriented to God. As St Paul says, 'By the grace of God I am

that I am.' And again, 'I live, yet not I but God liveth in me.' What more?

Homo erat. He says, 'Behold, a man.' We use the word *homo* for women as well as for men, but the Latins refused it to woman because of her weakness. *Homo* denotes something whole, nothing lacking. *Homo*, a man, a mortal, means one pertaining to earth, implying humility. Earth is the basest of the elements and placed in the midst with the heavens all round, it lies open to every celestial emanation. All the work and waste of heaven is caught midway in the sink of earth. *Homo* in yet another sense means moisture; as much as to say, one who is watered with grace; referring to those humble souls who receive the immediate influx of grace. In this inflowing grace there forthwith arises that light of the mind into which God is sending a ray of his unclouded splendour. In this powerful light a mortal is as far above his fellows as a live man is above his shadow on the wall. This light is vastly potent, not merely being in itself exempt from time and place, but anything it falls upon it robs of time and place and bodily semblance and everything extraneous thereto. As I have often said before, were there no time nor place nor aught beside it would be all one being. The man who is in this sense one and casts himself into the ground of humility, there will be watered with grace.

Concerning the third point: this light deprives of time and place. 'There was a man.' Who gave him this light? The light did. This word *erat* belongs expressly to God. In the Latin tongue there is no word so proper to God as *erat*. John in his gospel comes to using *erat* as a synonym for pure being. Things are all extras: but addition is possible only in thought; not by mental addition but by mental abstraction. Goodness and truth are additions, in theory at least, but the abstract essence without anything to it is what is meant by *erat*. Again, *erat* implies birth, an end of becoming. I was coming to-day, now I have come; and if we eliminate time from my coming and having arrived, then coming and come close up into one. Where coming and come coincide, there we are born and re-made and re-formed into his primitive form. I have often said that all the while a thing's aught is a matter of concrete existence it never will be re-created; refurbished it may be and coloured afresh, even as a seal that is old: that is restamped and renewed. A heathen doctor says, Things yonder no time can stale; there is the blessed life in the evermore: faultless, care-free, unalloyed being. Solomon says: 'There is nothing new under the sun,' though this is seldom taken in its proper sense. Everything under the sun grows old and dies, but yonder is nothing but new. Time brings two things: age and

decay. What the sun shines on is present in time. Creatures are here and are from God, but yonder where they are in God they are not at all the same as they are here; they are as different as the sun is from the moon, far more so. *Erat in eo*, he says: 'the Holy Ghost was in him,' wherein is being and becoming. 'There was a man.' Where was he? In Jerusalem. Jerusalem meaning vision of peace; it stands, in short, for man's peace and prosperity. It possibly signifies more. Paul says, 'The peace that passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds.' Pray God we may be such as to enter into this peace, which is himself. So help us God. Amen.

XXI[1]

HE THAT HATETH HIS SOUL

Qui odit animam suam in hoc mundo in vitam æternum custodiat eam (*Joh.* 12_{25}). I quote in Latin the gospel saying of our Lord, 'He that hateth his soul in this world shall keep it in eternal life.' Now mark what it is our Lord means when he speaks of a man hating his soul. He that loveth his soul in this mortal life and as she exists in this world shall lose her in eternal life; but he that hateth her mortal guise shall keep her unto life eternal.

There are two reasons for his using here the word soul. According to one authority *soul* is a name for the ground (or soil) and has nothing to do with the nature (or ground) of the soul. As a master has said, Whoso discourses of moveable things trenches not on the nature or ground of the soul. Try to name the soul as she is in herself, in her pure and abstract nature, and not a name can we find. They call her soul as they call a carpenter, neither a human being nor after any being at all but after his work. What our Lord means is this: he that loveth his soul in her nakedness, her impartible soul-nature, to wit, will hate and despise her in this dress. She hates and detests and rues being so far from the pure light she is in herself.

Our doctors say the soul is called fire because of the force and because of the heat and because of the light that is in her. Others declare she is a spark of the celestial nature. A third school calls her a light. A fourth calls her a breath. A fifth dubs her a number. They are trying to describe the soul by something pure and luminous. Number exists in the angels and in light there is number as well, but to name her after the highest and after the brightest is still to fall short of the ground of the soul. God who is nameless is ineffable and in her ground the soul too is

[1] See also Spamer's *Texte, etc.*, A. 5. One Latin and two German versions.

ineffable as he is ineffable. There is another reason for his saying that she hates. This term we apply to the soul is the name of the soul as she is in the prison of the body, so he means the soul in her individual state, still at the stage of taking thought, still in her prison-house. By taking thought for these nether things, by taking them in by her senses at all, she is confined : words cannot name any higher nature within her.

There are three reasons why my soul should hate herself. The first, that in so far as she is mine she is not God's. The second, because my soul is not wholly imbedded and set and re-cast into God. Augustine says, To have God for one's own one must needs first be God's. The third reason is : the soul's enjoying herself as the soul while enjoying God with the soul, which is wrong. She should be enjoying God in herself since he is entirely hers. As Christ says, ' he that loveth his soul shall lose it.' What the soul is in this world or beholds in this world : things comprehended, apparent at all, she shall hate. A master declares that the soul at her highest and purest transcends the whole world, nothing attaching the soul to the world but affection. Sometimes she has a natural love of the body. Sometimes she has a will inclined towards creatures. Another says the soul has no natural concern with the things of this world any more than the ear has with colour or the eye has with song. Our natural philosophers teach that the body is much rather in the soul than the soul is in the body. Even as the cask contains the wine and not the wine the cask, so does the soul keep the body in her rather than the body the soul. What the soul loves in this world she is pure from by nature. According to one philosopher, it is the soul's nature and her natural end to achieve within herself a feat of understanding, God informing her with the general idea. He that can say he has attained his nature finds all things within himself, fashioned in light as they are in God ; not as they are in nature but as they are in God. Neither spirit nor angel touches the ground or nature of the soul. In it she comes into the first, into the beginning, whence God breaks out in goodness into all creatures. There she loves all things in God, not pure as they are in her uncompounded nature, but merely impartible as they are in God. God has made this whole world as it were out of coal. Its pattern in gold is more lasting than this one in coal. Likewise the things in the soul are purer and nobler than they are in this world. The material which God made things out of is (to its exemplar in God) baser than coal is to gold. For the purpose of making a crock a man takes a handful of clay ; that is the medium he works in. He gives it a form he has in him, nobler than his material. And the moral of this is that the things in the intelligible world, the soul, to wit, are infinitely nobler

than they are in this; even as the image hewn and graven in gold so the types of all things are onefold in the soul. A master says, The soul has a natural gift for being impressed with the forms of all things. Another one says, Never did soul get to her virgin nature without finding all things imaged therein in the intelligible world which is incomprehensible, unthinkable. Gregory says: All reasoning in words about divine things is but a stammering.

One word more about the soul and I have done. 'O ye daughters of Jerusalem, look not upon me because I am brown! The sun hath coloured me and the children of my mother have striven against me' (*Cant.* 1_5). She refers to the children of this world, to them the soul speaks. The sun is the lust of this world: the visible, tangible things thereof do turn me swarthy and brown. Brown is not a pure colour: it is part light and part darkness. When the soul thinks or acts with her powers how enlightened soever these be, still, there is confusion. And therefore she says, 'My mother's children have striven against me.' These children being the lower powers of the soul, all clashing and at strife with her. The heavenly Father is our father and christendom is our mother. What though she be fair and well-favoured and good at her work, yet this is not perfect. Wherefore he cries, 'O thou fairest among women go forth and depart.' This world is like a woman, weak. But why does he address her, 'O fairest among women?' The angels are fair and are far above the soul. He says, 'fairest': in her light-nature. 'Go forth and depart': go forth from this world and depart from such things as thy soul is still prone to. And anything grasped let her hate.

XXII

THE LORD PUT FORTH HIS HAND

Misit dominus manum suam et teligit os meum et dixit mihi etc. (*Jer.* 1_9). 'The Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth and said unto me.'

When I preach it is my wont to speak about detachment, of the duty of ridding ourselves of self and of things. Or again, of return to the impartible good, God to wit. And thirdly, on the duty of remembering the high and noble nature God has put into the soul so that mortals may wonder about God. Fourthly, about the pure nature of God, the ineffable splendour of God. God is a word, an unspoken word. Augustine says: 'All scripture is vain.' We say that God is unspoken, but he is unspeakable. Grant he is somewhat: who can pronounce this word? None but the Word. God is the Word which pronounces itself. Where God exists he

is saying this Word; where he does not exist he says nothing. God is spoken and unspoken. The Father is the speaking energy and the Sun is the speech energising. What is in me goes forth of me; I have but to think and my word goes forth, at the same time abiding within. Even so does the Father speak forth his Son who meanwhile remains in him unspoken. I have repeatedly said, God's exit is his entrance. In proportion to my nearness to God does he speak himself into me. In the case of rational creatures the more they go out of themselves in their works the more they get into themselves. Not so with corporal things: the more active these are the further they get from themselves. All creatures desire to speak God in their works: they all of them speak him as well as they can but they cannot really pronounce him. Willy-nilly, in weal or in woe they are all trying to utter God who yet remains unspoken.

David said, 'The Lord is his name.' *Lord* means one set in authority; *knave* means an underling. Some names are proper to God and forbidden to aught beside God. *God* is the name peculiar to God just as *man* is the name for mankind. A man is a man be he foolish or wise. Seneca says, ''Tis a vile man that excels not humanity.' Another name we associate with God is *paternity*. When we call a man *father*, we take for granted a son. No father can be without having a son. True, they merge, beyond time, into eternal nature. The third name in its higher sense relates to God and in its lower one to time. God is called by many names in scripture. Now I say, anything we can think of in God or put any name to, that God is not. God transcends name, transcends nature. We hear of one good man who in prayers besought God for his name. Then, 'Peace!' quoth a brother, 'thou art abasing God.' We can find no name to give to God; but we are permitted to use the names his saints have called him by, those whose hearts inspired by God were flooded with his divine light. Hence we learn, first, how to pray to God. We ought to say, Lord, in those very names which thou didst instil into the hearts of saints, suffusing them with thy light, we praise thee and adore thee. And secondly we learn that in giving God no name at all we praise and honour him sufficiently since God is above name and ineffable.

Out of the fullness of his power the Father speaks the Son and in him all things. All creatures are the utterance of God. Like as my lips proclaim and tell forth God so does a stone's existence, and we can glean more from the fact than from the telling of it. Work wrought by highest nature in its sovran power a lower nature cannot comprehend. If it did the selfsame work then would it not be lower, but the same. Creatures all want to copy

God in all they do. But it is precious little they are able to reveal. Even the highest angels, inasmuch as they ascend and come in touch with God, are no more like than black and white to that which is in God. It is altogether different, what creatures have received, yet they all desire to speak as nearly as possible the same. The prophet says: 'Lord, thou sayest one and I understand two.' When God speaks into the soul, as it falls it divides. The higher we soar in our understanding the more we are in him. In eternity, the Father is speaking his Son all the time and pouring forth all creatures in him. They all have a call to return whence they came forth. Their whole life and nature is a vocation, a flight back to what they came out of.

The prophet says: 'The Lord sent forth his hand,' meaning the Holy Ghost. He says, 'he touched my mouth,' and straightway there follow the words, 'he spake unto me.' The mouth of the soul is the highest part of the soul and she has this in mind when she says, 'he hath put his Word into my mouth,' this being the kiss of the soul; mouth to mouth the Father conveys his Son into the soul, then he speaks to her, saying, 'Lo, this day I have chosen thee to set thee over nations and over kingdoms.' God says he will choose us to-day. Yonder in eternity, where time is not, there is ever to-day. 'And I have set thee over nations,' *i.e.* above this world which thou must be rid of; 'and over kingdoms,' meaning, that more than one thing is too much; it behoves thee to die to all things and get back to the height where we dwell in the Holy Ghost. Amen.

XXIII

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Spiritus domini replevit orbem terrarum etc. (*Sap.* 1_7). 'The spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.'

A philosopher says, All creatures bear witness to the divine nature whence they proceeded forth, in their will to emulate the Deity they came from.

Creatures proceed forth in two ways. The first is a radical process, like roots coming out of a tree. The second emanation is by mode of will. Behold the twofold emanation of divinity. One the descent of the Son from the Father, this after the manner of a birth. The other, the outpouring of the love of Father and Son, the Holy Ghost, to wit, for in him they love one another. All creatures proclaim their origin, their divine descent betrays itself in their works. According to a Greek philosopher, God

keeps all creatures in leash, as it were, and they must follow where he leads. Hence nature is aye making for the highest.

The second emanation is the Holy Ghost, by mode of will. Nature would fain make nothing but the Son; were she allowed she would do father's work, so nature would be ever giving sons did she not suffer accidental lapses. When nature is working in time and space then father and son are different. One master explains that a carpenter building a house will erect it first in his mind and, were the house subject enough to his will, then, materials apart, the only difference between them would be that of begetter and suddenly begotten. Lo, thus it is in God, for since there is no time nor place in him, therefore they are one God, there being no distinction save outpouring and outpoured.

According to the scriptures, 'The spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.' Why is he called Lord? Because he fills us. Why is he called spirit? Because he unites us with himself. A lord is known by three signs. First, he is rich. Rich means possessing all things without stint. Hence none is really rich but God in whom all things are harboured indivisibly. So he can give all things and this is the second sign of riches. A philosopher says, God hawks himself to all creatures and each takes as much as it wants. I trow God offers himself to me as he does to the highest angel and were I as apt as he is I should receive as he does. As I have often observed, God always behaves as though he was trying to please the soul. The third sign of riches is, giving for love; whoso giveth for aught is not really rich. God's richness is shown by his giving all his gifts gratis. As saith the prophet, 'Thou art my God, thou needest not my possessions.' He alone is the Lord and the spirit. I say, he is spirit; our happiness lies in union with him.

The most excellent work of God in creature is being. My father gives me my nature but he does not give me my being: God does that, none beside. That is why everything that exists takes such a shrewd delight in being. The being of the soul receives the influx of God's light; not pure and limpid as God sends it forth but in ambient undulations. We can see the sunlight where it falls upon a tree or any other object, but we fail to apprehend the sun itself. And so with any gift of God: these are all meted out according to the taker not according to the giver.

A philosopher says, 'God is the standard of measure,' and so far as one mortal contains more God than another, to that extent he is wiser and nobler and better than the other. To have more of God simply means being more like him: the more God's likeness exists in us the more spiritual we are. A philosopher says, 'Where the lowest spirit ends the highest bodily thing begins.' All of

which goes to prove that God being spirit, the least of spiritual things excels the best of corporal things. Soul is more excellent than anything bodily. Soul is contained in a place, as it were, betwixt time and eternity, touching them both. With her higher powers she is in touch with eternity; in her inferior powers she is in contact with time. Thus, mark you, in time she does not function according to time but in her eternal nature which she has in common with the angels. Spirit is a subtle thing, bringing life to all the limbs in virtue of the close accord of soul with body. Albeit spirit is rational, and does the entire work, yet we do not say, my soul does so and so, for both of them together are a man. This fact I may make bold to state: because of the intimate union of the body and the soul the soul is in the smallest member as much as in the body as a whole. St Augustine says, 'The union of body and soul may be close, but closer still is the union that spirit has with spirit.' Lo, he is Lord and spirit, may he beatify us by uniting us with him.

It is a puzzling question how the soul survives when God imprints himself in her. Consider. Were God to give her any outward being she would scorn it; but when he gives her himself in himself she receives and suffers in his and not in her own, his being hers: he has fetched her out of her own so his is now hers and hers really is his. So she suffers in union with God. This is the spirit of the Lord which has filled the whole world. Amen.

XXIV

ST JOHN SAW IN A VISION

St John saw in a vision a lamb standing on Mount Sion and with him stood forty and four who were not of this world nor had they wifely names. These were all virgins who stood next the lamb, and when the lamb inclined they inclined with him, singing with the lamb a new song and having their names and the name of their Father written in their foreheads.

John says, 'I looked and lo, a lamb stood on the mountain.' I say, John himself was that mountain whereon he saw the lamb, and whoso sees the Lamb of God must himself be the mountain, ascending to his highest, purest part.

Again. He says he saw a lamb standing upon a mountain: when one thing stands upon another its lowest point touches the other's highest. God touches all things and remains untouched. God is above all things standing in himself and his instance sustains all creatures. Creatures have an uppermost and undermost. God has not. God is over everything and is not touched by

anything. All creatures seek outside themselves, in one another, what they lack. God does not. God does not look outside himself: everything that creatures have God has entire in him; he is the floor, the roof of creatures. True, one is prior to another down to the very last, one being born before another: though creature gives not of her being to him, yet she keeps some of his. God is a simple presence, a stay-at-home in himself. With any creature, as regards her noble nature, the more she sits at home the more of herself she gives out. A common stone, like limestone, for example, gives itself out a stone and nothing more. But a precious stone, this has great power because of something in it, some interior fastness wherein it rears its head and, so to speak, peers out. According to the masters, no creature is so stay-at-home as body and soul, nor goes so far afield as the soul's highest part.

He says, 'I saw a lamb standing.' From which we learn four things. First, the lamb is fed and clothed and that in goodly fashion, which to our mind looks as though we, having gotten so much from God and that so goodly, are bound to seek in all we do only his honour and his glory. Again, the lamb stood. It is good for friend to stand by friend. God stands by us, is standing by us, steady and unmoved. He says: 'There stood with him a multitude, each having written in his forehead his name and the name of his Father.' Let at least God's name be written in us. We must bear God's image in us and his light must lighten us, if we would be John.

XXV

THE LORD HATH SENT HIS ANGEL

Nunc scio vere, quia misit dominus angelum suum (*Act.* 12_{11}). Freed from his prison bonds by the power of the supreme God, Peter exclaims, 'Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me out of the power of Herod, out of the hand of the enemy.'

We will reverse the words and say, 'The Lord hath sent his angel, therefore I know of a surety.' Peter symbolises intuition. As I have often said, intuition and intellect do not unify the soul in God. Intellect is a matter of pure being. Intuition, its forerunner, goes ahead and penetrates to what is born there: God's one-begotten Son. Our Lord declares, in Matthew, that no one knows the Father but the Son. Now, philosophers say understanding lies in likeness. Some of them say the soul is made of all things since she is capable of understanding all things. That sounds ridiculous, but it is true. They say that anything I know must

be wholly present to me in the likeness of my understanding. But according to the saints, power is in the Father, likeness in the Son and union in the Holy Ghost. Hence, if the Father is all present to the Son and the Son is all-to like him, therefore no one knows the Father but the Son.

Peter says, 'Now I know of a surety.' Why does he know of a surety? Because it is divine light which does not deceive. And because we see in it quite clearly without anything to hide the view. Paul says concerning it: 'God dwells in light inaccessible.' Doctors declare that the wisdom we learn here stays with us yonder. St Paul says it will go. A philosopher once said, 'Real knowledge, even in this body, is intrinsically so delightful that the sum-total of created things is nothing to the joys of pure perception.' Yet noble though it be, it is but contingent; as one small word to all the world even thus insignificant is all the wisdom we learn here compared with the whole and perfect truth. Look you. Paul says it goes. And even if it stayed it would turn to foolishness and be as nothing to the actual truth we see. Thirdly, we surely know, for things seen here as changing we see as changeless there where we get them as a whole and indivisible, approximately one, things widely sundered here being close together there where all things are at hand: both the first day and the last are happening at the present instant yonder.

'Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel.' When the Lord sends his angel to the soul she becomes sure-knowing. Not unjustly God ordained Peter should keep the key. For Peter stands for intuition, and it is intuition with the key that unlocks and goes in and finds God face to face, whereupon she notifies her find to her partner, will, she having had the will before, for what I will I seek. Perception leads the way. It is the princess seeking the prince upon the mountain-top, in virgin realms; she proclaims him to the soul and soul to nature and nature to the passions of the body. So noble is the soul at her highest and her best, the doctors cannot find her any name. They call her *anima* because she animates the body.

Theologians say that next to the first emanation of the Godhead, when the Son breaks out of the Father, his angel is most like to God. True, soul is like to God in her highest part, but this angel is even more like God. All that belongs to this angel is godlike. The angel was sent to the soul to bring her back to the very same form wherein he is formed, for knowledge comes by likeness. The soul is capable of knowing all things and she never rests till she attains her original form wherein all things are one; it is there she rests, in God. In God one creature is no better than another. According to the masters, being and knowing are the same, for

things that are not are not known and things that are most are most known. God has transcendent being, so he transcends all knowing, as I said in my first sermon two days back. The soul, informed with primitive light, sealed with the seal of pure being, smacking of God prior to truth and gnosis, with every named nature sloughed away: the soul (I say) at this stage of all-perfect knowledge has gotten being to match. As St Paul says, 'God dwells in light inaccessible.' He hangs suspended in his own pure being whereto naught is attached. He is merely a presence in himself, where neither this nor that exists, for what is in God is God.

A heathen says, They that hang under God are hanging in God, and while having real subsistence in themselves do yet impend in him who has neither end nor beginning, for in God nothing alien betides. Heaven affords us an example. It never takes in aliens as aliens. And by the same token, what gets to God is changed: however vile it be, on bringing it to God it sheds its self. For instance, I may have wisdom but not be it. I can gain wisdom and can also lose it. But what is God's is God; it cannot leave him. It is implanted in God's nature; God's nature being so stable that anything to do with it is settled in it once for all or always stops outside. Now reflect and marvel! If God converts vile things into himself, how ween ye he will treat the soul, which he has dignified with his own image?

XXVI

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGIN

Æmulor enim vos dei æmulatione etc. (*2 Cor.* 11_2). In the name of our Lord. We read on the Feast of the Virgin the words of St Paul, 'I have espoused you to one husband, Christ, rejuvenant.' The masters ask, 'Has the Son been born?' We say, no! The masters ask, 'Is the Son going to be born?' We say, no! The masters are answered: the Son is fully born, he is being born anew unceasingly. St Paul says, 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.' His power is his wisdom and his wisdom is his power. Christ is the man whose youth is perennially renewed.

Now St Paul says, 'To this man I have espoused you.' For as marriage between man and wife is binding, so there is eternal marriage between your souls and God. A maid is given to a man hoping to bear his child. And God did make the soul intending her to bear in her his one-begotten Son. The happening of this birth in Mary ghostly was to God better pleasing than his being born of her in flesh. And this same birth to-day in the God-loving soul delights God more than his creation of the heavens and earth.

The philosophers say the soul is bigger than the heavens. St John says: 'He who sat upon the throne declared, "Behold, I make all things new."' Now, according to St Augustine, 'God's speaking is his child-bearing and his child-birth is his Word.' God spake never a word but one and that he holds so dear that he will never say another. If God stopped saying his Word, but for an instant even, heaven and earth would disappear. Augustine says: 'As the marriage of man and woman is for good and all, so is the marriage of the soul.' The highest power of the soul, the one for ever straining up to God, is called the man. The lower power, the one that is condemned to wander among mortals, is the maid. The higher power, the man, goes all uncovered. But the lower power, the maid, is closely veiled and this lower power is taken to the higher. To this nature it belongs to be always active. It tries all the time, father-like, to beget; and were it not prevented, a son would be always being born as with the heavenly Father. But what God does of his free gift (man's) nature hinders and a girl is born; but were there neither time nor place nor matter, man would rejuvenate himself as the Son does the Father, always.

God said: 'Behold I make all things fruitful.' Then why am I myself not fruitful? God first bears his image in the God-loving soul and afterwards himself. If God gave himself to the soul here in time she would be vexed. So he gives her himself in eternity, in the perennial now, up-springing freshly without ceasing. She is too curious to rest until she finds her source. This is quite plain from Philip's words: 'Show us the Father and we shall be satisfied.' As the eternal Son of God comes welling up in his paternal heart, so he wells up in the God-loving soul. Mortal things work outwardly, ghostly things work inwardly. The soul this birth once happens in, that soul is nigh let into God; if it happens twice she gets still more into God. The more frequent this birth the deeper in God and the closer knit into the Father's heart. This birth transcends here and now. *Here*, that is, place; *now*, that is, time. It befalls in eternity. May we, being born in him, enable him to bear himself in us. So help us Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

XXVII

REJOICE IN THE LORD

Gaudete in domini, iterum gaudete etc. (*Philip.* 4_4). St Paul says: 'Rejoice in the Lord and have no more care: the Lord is present with your thoughts which are known unto God in prayer and thanksgiving.' 'Rejoice in the Lord alway,' he says. Jerome declares that none receives knowledge nor wisdom nor honour from God

except he be a virtuous man. No virtuous man is he who, changing not his ways, does not receive from God knowledge and wisdom and joy. He says again: 'Rejoice in the Lord.' Not in *our* Lord but in *the* Lord. I have repeatedly explained that God's lordship consists not alone in his being lord of all creatures: his lordship consists in having the power to create a thousand worlds and to transcend them every one in his pure essence: therein lies his lordship.

'Rejoice in the Lord (alway),' he says. And here we note two precepts. First, that we must remain all within in the Lord, not looking for him outside whether in knowledge or in love: simply rejoice within in the Lord. The other precept is: rejoice in his innermost in his first, whence all things get their joy and take their being. That is the meaning of 'Rejoice alway.' As St Augustine hath it, 'He rejoices all the time who is rejoicing above time and timelessly.' Then he goes on to say: 'Have no more care. The Lord is present, is at hand.' The soul must needs cast off all care what time she is rejoicing in the Lord, leastwise on her union with God. And hence his words, 'Have no more care: the Lord is present, he is nigh.' In other words, God is with us in our inmost soul, provided he find us within and not gone out on business with our five senses. The soul must stop at home in her innermost, purest self; be ever within and not flying out: there God is present, God is nigh.

Another meaning of the particle *by* which he employs. He is in himself, not going far out but remaining all by himself. Quoth David: 'Rejoice, my soul, O Lord, for unto thee have I lifted her up.' The soul must put forth all her strength to lift herself above herself and be translated beyond time and place into the void where God is in and by himself, not going out nor eke in touch with any outside thing. Jerome remarks that 'God can no more have recourse to time and temporal things than stones can have angelic wisdom.' He says: 'The Lord is nigh.' Quoth David: 'God is nigh unto all them that call upon him, that call upon him in truth and invoke him.' How to call upon him, to call upon him in truth, to invoke him, that I leave aside. But he uses the words 'in truth.' The Son alone is the truth and not the Father, save in the sense that they are one truth in their essence. That is truth which reveals what I have in my heart without likeness. This revelation is truth. The Son alone is the truth. The whole content of the Father's love he speaks at once in his Son. This utterance, this act, is the truth.

He goes on to say: 'Your thoughts are known unto him in the Lord,' *i.e.* in this truth with the Father. Faith inheres in intellectual light and sight in the combative faculty which is always

aspiring to the highest and the purest : to the truth, where God is in himself. I have sometimes said, watch me these souls : their power is too free, too passionate to bear restraint of any kind.

XXVIII

THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT[1]

Missus est Gabriel angelus etc. (*Luc.* 1_{26}). St Luke says in his gospel, 'the angel was sent from God into a land called Galilee, into a town called Nazareth, to a virgin called Mary, who was of the house of David.' According to Bede, the theologian, this was the beginning of our salvation. I have said before and say again that everything our Lord has ever done he did simply to the end that God might be with us and that we might be one with him, and that is the reason why God was made man. The masters say that God was ever being born in our Lady ghostly ere ever he was born of her in flesh, and from the overflow of that begetting wherein the heavenly Father begat his one-begotten Son within her soul the eternal Word received its human nature in her and she became with carnal child.

He says, 'the angel was sent from God.' The soul would scorn to have the angelic light were it not sent to her from God ; if there were not concealed in it the light of God to make the angel's light detectable, she would have none of it.

He says, 'the angel.' What is an angel ? Three doctors give three different definitions of what an angel is. Dionysius says, An angel is a mirror without flaw and passing clear containing the reflection of God's light. Augustine says, An angel is nigh unto God and matter is nigh unto him. John Damascene says, An angel is a reflection of God and through all that is his there is shining the image of God. The soul has this image in her summit whereon the light of God for ever shines. This is his first definition of an angel. Later on he calls him a dividing sword, aflame with divine desire, and, he adds, 'angels are free and inimical to matter.'

He says, 'the angel was sent from God.' What for ? According to Dionysius, an angel has three functions. First, he purifies, next he enlightens, and lastly he perfects. He purifies the soul from stain, *i.e.* he purges her from matter and gathers her together to herself, cleansing her from foulness as one angel does another. Then he enlightens her in twofold fashion. Divine light is so overwhelming that the soul is unable to bear it unless it is tempered in the angel's light and so conveyed into the soul. He enlightens

[1] See also Sievers' No. 2.

her therefore by reflection. The angel conveys his own knowledge to the soul and strengthens her in this way to bear the light of God.

If I were in a wilderness alone and was afraid, the presence of a child would dissipate my dread and give me courage, so noble, so blithe a thing is life. Failing a child, a beast would comfort me. Hence necromancers use an animal, a dog (for instance), the animal's vitality invigorating them. Knowledge is power. The angel conveyed it to the soul in preparation for the light of God.

He says, 'the angel was sent from God.' The soul must be like an angel in the ways that I have named if the Son is to be sent to her and born in her. But there remains the question of how the angel perfects her. May God send his angel to us, So help us God. Amen.

XXIX

THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT

Missus est Gabriel angelus (*Luc.* 1_{26}). 'In time the angel Gabriel was sent from God.' In what time? In the sixth month, John being then quick within his mother's womb. When anyone asks me, Why do we pray or why do we fast or do our work withal, I say, So that God may be born in our souls. What were the scriptures written for and why did God create the world and the angelic nature? Simply that God might be born in the soul. All cereal nature means wheat, all treasure nature means gold, all generation means man. As the philosopher says, No animal exists but has somewhat in common with mankind in time. First of all when a word is conceived in my mind it is a subtle, intangible thing; it is true word when it takes shape in my thought. Later, as spoken aloud by my mouth, it is but an outward expression of the interior word. Even so the eternal Word is spoken in the innermost and purest recesses of the soul, in the summit of her rational nature, and there befalls this birth. Whoso has nothing more than a firm belief in and lively conviction of this will be glad to know how this birth comes to pass and what conduces to it.

St Paul says: 'In the fullness of time God sent his Son.' St Augustine was asked what it meant, this fullness of time. It is the fullness (or end) of the day when the day is done: then the day is over. Certain it is that there is no time where this birth befalls, for nothing hinders this birth so much as time and creature. It is an obvious fact that time affects neither God nor the soul. Did time touch the soul she would not be soul. If God were affected by time he would not be God. Further, if time could touch the soul, then God could not be born in her. The soul wherein God is born must have escaped from time, and time must

have dropped away from her; she must be absolutely one in will and desire.

Another fullness of time. If someone had the knowledge and the power to gather up the time and all the happenings of these six thousand years and all that is to come ere the world ends to boot, all this, summed up into one present now, would be the fullness of time. This is the now of eternity, when the soul knows all things in God, as new and fresh and lovely as I find them now at present. The narrowest of the powers of my soul is more than heaven wide. To say nothing of the intellect wherein there is measureless space, wherein I am as near a place a thousand miles away as the spot I am standing on this moment. Theologians teach that the angel hosts are countless, the number of them cannot be conceived. But to one who sees distinctions apart from multiplicity and number, to him, I say, a hundred is as one. Were there a hundred Persons in the Godhead he would still perceive them as one God.

As regards the angels. The angels, of whatever rank, abet and assist at God's birth in the soul; that is to say, they have satisfaction, they delight and rejoice in this birth. Nothing is wrought by the angels: the birth is due to God alone and anything that ministers thereto is work of service. May God be born in us, So help us God. Amen.

XXX

'VISION IS THE WHOLE REWARD'

Beatus es, Simon Bariona, quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed pater meus, qui in cœlis est (*Matt.* 16_{17}). 'Blessed art thou, Simon Peter,' says our Lord, 'for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' St Peter has four names: Peter and Barjona and Simon and Cephas. Our Lord says, 'Blessed (or happy) art thou.' Everyone desires happiness. As the philosopher hath it, All men desire to be. Hence St Augustine's dictum, The good man wants no praise, he wants to be praiseworthy. And our own doctors teach withal that virtue is so pure, so wholly abstract and detached from corporal things in the ground and summit of its nature that nothing whatever can occur therein without defiling virtue and introducing vice. The least thought or suggestion of self-seeking and it is not virtue: it is turned to vice. Such is virtue by nature.

A heathen philosopher says, Virtue, except for virtue's sake, is in no wise a virtue. If its object is praise or aught else, that is

bartering virtue. Genuine virtue is not to be sold for anything on earth. Wherefore the good man seeks no praise: he seeks to be praiseworthy. It is not the chiding that we ought to mind but the fact of deserving to be chidden.

'Blessed art thou,' quoth our Lord. Beatitude lies in four things. To have all that has being and is lustily to be desired and brings delight; to have it all at once and whole in the undivided soul and that in God, revealed in its perfection, in its flower, where it first burgeons forth in the ground of its existence, and all conceived where God is conceiving himself—that is happiness. The name Peter means seer of God. Now, theologians question whether the kernel of external life lies more in intellect or will. Will has two operations: desire and love. Intellect, with its simple function, is therefore better; its work is understanding, and it never stops till it gets a naked hold on what it sees. Withal it runs ahead of will and tells it what to love. We desire a thing while as yet we do not possess it. When we have it we love it: desire then falling away.

What must a man be to see God? He must be dead. 'No man can see me and live,' said our Lord. Now St Gregory says, 'That man is dead who is dead to the world.' Ye can judge for yourselves how dead one may be and how little can touch us the things of this world. By dying to this world we do not die to God. St Augustine prayed a variety of prayers. 'Grant me, Lord,' he said, 'to know both thee and me.' 'O Lord, have mercy upon me and show me thy face and grant me that I die not until I eternally behold thee.' This is the first point: one must be dead to see God. So much for the first name, Peter.

One philosopher says, were there no means we should see the beloved in heaven. But another one says, were there no means we should see nothing. Both of them are right. The colour on the wall which is carried to my eye is filtered and refined in the air and in the light and transmitted in a pure state to my eye. Even so the soul must be strained by light and grace before it can see God. So rather is that master right who said that without means we should not see at all. But the other one is also right who said that without means we should see the beloved in heaven. For the soul would see God naked if there were nothing between.

The second name, Barjona, signifies a son of grace, in whom the soul, clarified and sublimed, is meet for the vision of God.

The third name is Simon. That is to say, one who listens, one who obeys. To hear God one must be divorced from the world. David says, 'I will be still and listen to what God is saying in me.' He pronounces peace in his Word, on his saints, on his people, on all such as commune with their heart. Happy the man who is

busy attending to what God is saying in him. He is directly subject to the divine light-ray. The soul that stands with all her powers under the light of God is fired and inflamed with divine love. The divine light shines straight in from above, and a perpendicular sun on one's head is a thing that few can survive. Yet the highest power of the soul, her head, is held erect beneath this shaft of godly light so that there can shine in this light divine which I have oft described as being so bright, so overwhelming, so transcendent, that all lights are but darkness in comparison with this light. All creatures, as so being, are as naught; dowsed in the light wherein they get their being they are aught. How noble soever the natural mind yet to reach, to grasp God without means the soul must possess these six qualifications I speak of.

First, she is dead to changing things. Next, she is well clarified in light and grace. Thirdly, she is without means. Fourthly, she hears God's Word in her heart. Fifth, she is under the divine light. The sixth is the heathen philosopher's definition of happiness: one perpetual ascension and vision of beatitude in God. Where the Son himself is understanding, in his first leaping forth, there in God's highest we too shall understand. Wherefore it behoves us to keep our head turned steadfastly that way.

Cephas means a head. Understanding is the head of the soul. The superficial notion is that love stands first. But the soundest arguments expressly state (what is the truth) that the kernel of eternal life lies rather in knowledge than in love. This mark, for our best masters say, will no special thing, and lo! intellect, understanding, this flies straight up to God. Love turns to the loved: she finds there what is good. Intellect seizes the cause of the good. Honey is sweeter in itself than anything we make from it. Love takes God as being sweet, but intellect goes deeper and conceives God as being. 'Blessed art thou, Simon Peter,' quoth our Lord. To the righteous man God gives divine being, and calls him by the name which is appropriate to that being. Thus he goes on to speak of 'my Father which is in heaven.' Among names none is more appropriate than He-who-is. That one should recognise a thing and simply say, it is, would seem absurd; call it a stone, a bit of wood, and we know what that means. But suppose everything detached, abstracted, pared away, and nothing left except the *is*; that is the characteristic nature of his name. Our Lord promised his disciples, 'My followers shall sit at my table in my Father's kingdom, and shall eat my meat and drink my drink which my Father hath prepared for me.' Happy is the wight who has attained to receiving with the Son just where the Son receives. Right there we too shall find our happiness, and there in

his felicity, there where he has his being, in that same ground his friends shall all behold and thence shall draw their happiness. That is the table in God's kingdom. May we approach that table, So help us God. Amen.

XXXI

THE MAN IN THE SOUL

Vir meus servus tuus mortuus est (*4 Reg.* 4_{1-7}). The woman said to the prophet, 'My husband thy servant is dead and the creditors are come to take my two sons as bondsmen for the debt, for I have nothing but a drop of oil.' Then said the prophet, 'Go borrow empty vessels and pour a little in: it will increase and multiply and will pay thy debt and release thy sons. Thou and thy children can live on the rest.'

The spark (*i.e.* the intellect, the head of the soul), the so-called husband of the soul, is none other than a spark of the divine nature, a divine light, a ray, an imprint of divinity. A woman begged our Lord for the water which he gives. Whoso drinks of this shall never thirst. Theologians say, the best gift of God is the Holy Ghost wherein God bestows all his grace and favour, his living water, namely. 'Whom I give this to shall never thirst.' This water is grace and light upspringing in the soul to everlasting life.

The woman said, 'Sir, give me of this water.' And our Lord replied, 'Bring me thine husband.' She said, 'I have no husband.' Quoth our Lord, 'Thou hast well said: thou hast not one, thou hast had five, and he whom now thou hast is not thine husband.' St Augustine asks: 'Why does our Lord reply, "Thou hast well said"?' What he means is this: thy five senses, these are the five husbands thou hadst in thy youth, after thine own heart; now in thine age thou hast one, not thine own: intellect, namely, and this thou dost not obey. When the man in the soul, the intellect, is dead, unchecked evil prevails. To separate soul and body is bad enough, but for the soul to be divorced from God, that is a far worse matter. As the soul is the life of the body so God is the life of the soul. As the soul suffuses our members so God suffuses the powers of the soul and is passed on by them in goodness and love to everything round that they may be aware of him as flowing all the time, *i.e.* above time, in eternity and in the life they live.

The woman said, 'Sir, my husband thy servant is dead.' *Servus* means one who receives, receiving another's; one who keeps and keeps for another. To keep for himself would make

him a thief. Intellect is a servant, more so than will is or love. Will and love fall on God as being good: were he not good they would ignore him. But intellect pierces right through into essence, reckless of goodness, of power, of wisdom, of things accidental whatever they be and added to God. Not looking for these she gets them in him when, merged into his essence, she knows God simply as existence. What though he be not good nor just, yet she enjoys him as pure being. Here intellect is like the highest rank of angels of which there are three choirs. The Thrones receive God into them and preserve God in themselves. In the Cherubim God rests; they see God continually. The Seraphim are ardent (burning): like to these is the God-bearing intellect. With these angels the intellect spies God, in his vestibule, naked, as one without difference.

Quoth the woman, 'Sir, my husband thy servant is dead, and the creditors have come for my two sons.' What are the two sons of the soul? St Augustine, and with him a heathen doctor, speaks of the two faces of the soul. One is turned towards this world and towards the body, in this she works virtue and wisdom. The other face gazes straight into God; the divine light is always in it, and this tells upon it unless, through being from home, she has it unawares. When the spark of the intellect carries right into God, then the man is alive. The birth takes place. Not once a year it happens nor yet once a month nor once a day but all the time, beyond time, in the open, where there is neither here nor now nor thought nor nature. That is why we speak of sons, not daughters.

Now, to speak of the two sons in another sense. As understanding and will. Understanding leaps out of the intellect first and is afterwards followed by will, from them both. But no more of this.—These two sons of intellect may be taken in yet another way. One as power, the other as actuality. One heathen doctor says that it is in this power the soul becomes all things, ideally. In her actuality she is, like the Father, making all things new. It pleased God to seal her in the nature of all creatures: before the world when she existed not. God wrought this whole world ghostly in every single angel before he made the world itself. An angel has two understandings. The one is morning light, the other is the evening light. In the morning light he sees everything in God. In the evening light he sees things in the light of his own nature. When he goes out into things it grows night. So long as he remains within he has the evening light. We say that the angels rejoice when a man becomes good. But, our best doctors ask, do the angels also repine when a man commits sin? We say: No; they see into the justice of God and enjoy all things therein

as they are in God. Therefore they do not repine. Intellect in its potential power is like the angel's natural light, *i.e.* the evening light. With her actual power she raises all things up into God, where all things are bathed in the morning light.

Quoth the woman, 'The creditors are come to seize my two sons for their slaves.' Then said the prophet, 'Go borrow empty vessels from thy neighbours.' These neighbours mean all creatures and the five senses and the powers of the soul with her interior faculties which work in secret and are angels. From all these neighbours borrow empty vessels. Let us borrow empty vessels; these filled with heavenly wisdom will give us means to pay our debt and, on the rest, to live eternally, So help us God. Amen.

XXXII[1]

THE SOUL SPARK

Homo quidam fecit cœnam magnum (*Luc.* 14_{16}). St Luke relates in his gospel how 'a certain man gave a great supper or evening entertainment.' Who makes it? A certain man. What does he mean by calling it a supper? One master says this betokens great affection, seeing none are bidden save the intimates of God. * When we give a morning party all and sundry are invited but to an evening meal we invite important people, the people that we like and our own familiar friends.* Secondly, he has in mind how perfect are those souls who enjoy this evening meal. The evening never comes without a whole day having gone before. Were there no sun there were no day. Sunrise, that is morning light which goes on getting brighter up to middle-day. Just as the divine light rising in the soul gradually eclipses the powers of the soul until the advent of the noon. No day, no spiritual day, at all can dawn within the soul except she receive divine light. * Divine light breaks into the soul and makes her morning, and the soul mounts up in this light into space, to the zenith at high noon.* Thirdly, he implies that to take this supper worthily we have to come at evening. When the light of this world fails it is the evening. As King David sings, 'He riseth in the evening and His name it is the Lord!' So Jacob at eventide did lay him down to sleep. This betokens peace of mind. Fourthly, he remembers, as St Gregory points out, that after supper there comes no other meal. * When the spark in the soul takes in divine light it needs no other sustenance but keeps ever to this divine light.*

[1] See also Jostes, Nos. 1 and 6; and Spamer's *Texte*, A. 4 (3 versions), from which the starred passages are added.

To whom God grants this provender, so fragrant, so delicious, that soul shall never relish any other fare.

St Augustine says, 'God is of such a nature that once embracing him we can never rest elsewhere.' St Augustine says, 'Lord, so thou take from us thyself, grant us then another thee or we shall have no rest; we have no mind for aught but thee.' One holy man says of the God-loving soul, that she gets out of God whatsoever she will, befooling him so thoroughly he can deny her not a thing there is. He took himself in one way and gave himself another way: he took himself God-and-man and gave himself God-and-Man, another self in a mystic vessel. Very precious hallows are not wantonly exposed to public gaze and touch. So he clad himself in the frock of the appearance of bread, even as my bodily food is altered in my soul, which is not in my nature for an instant without combining with it. For there is a power in nature which separates the base and throws it out, and the high invades the low to the last needle-point and is embodied in it. The things I ate a fortnight since are every bit as much united with my soul as what I did receive within my mother's womb. Whoso takes this food fasting becomes as truly one therewith as flesh and blood are with my soul.

There was a certain man; the man had not a name because this man is God.

The philosopher affirms concerning the first cause that it transcends speech. All words fail. Because of the surpassing pureness of its nature. We have but three ways of speaking about things: first, in terms of things above them; second, of their likes; and thirdly, of the works of the things. To give you an example. The power of the sun draws up the precious sap out of the roots into the shoots and brings it out in flower, here the solar power being above it. *As we say of the tree, so we say of the things above the tree; of the sun, for example, which is working in the tree.* Likewise I say the divine light is working in the soul. *The spark in the soul being drawn up in this light and in the Holy Ghost and borne aloft to its first source. But nothing true can be spoken of God, because there is nothing above him.* That the soul expresses God does not in anywise affect his real intrinsic being: no one can express what he actually is. Sometimes we say one thing is like another. *We can say nothing of God because nothing is like him.* Creatures enclose a mere nothing of God wherefore they cannot disclose him. The painter who has painted a good portrait therein shows his art: it is not himself that it reveals to us. Creatures can no more give out God than they can take in exactly what he is.

The God-and-Man has prepared this supper, the ineffable man

who is wordless. According to St Augustine, what we say about God is not true and the things that we say not are true. Things we say that God is he is not; what we say he is not that he is rather than what we say that he is.

Who has prepared this repast? A man, the man who is God. King David says, 'O Lord, how great and manifold is thy entertainment, the sweets that are laid up for them that love thee!' (Not 'them that fear thee.') St Augustine meditating on this food, regarded it with loathing and distaste, when lo! he heard a voice from within, 'I am the food of the great, wax and grow great * eating me; nor ween not that I shall be turned into thee: thou shalt be turned into me.* When God works in the fiery heat the diverse things within the soul sublime and burn away. By the absolute truth! soul enters more into God than any food into us; nay, the soul is changed into God. There is a power in the soul which splits off what is base and is absorbed into God. To wit, the spark of the soul. My soul becomes more one with God than food does with my soul.

Who has prepared this evening meal? A man. Dost know his name? * Not I. His name is not spoken. He is more silence than speech. He is above name. What food has he prepared for this feast? Himself, no less than himself.* (What does the servant mean?) According to St Gregory the servant means preachers. And in another sense the servant means the angels, * the angels ever calling us with interior voice.* Thirdly, methinks this servant is the spark of the soul, which is sent there by God and is his light striking down from above, the reflection (or image) of his divine nature and ever opposed to anything ungodly: not a power of the soul, as some theologians make it, but a permanent tendency to good; aye, even in hell it is inclined to good. According to the masters, this light is of the nature of unceasing effort; it is called synderesis, that is to say, a joining to and turning from. It has two works. One is remorse for imperfection. The other work consists in ever more invoking good and bringing it direct into the soul, even though she be in hell. It is a great supper. He said to the servant, 'Go out and compel them to come in, those that are bidden, for all things are now ready.' All that he is the soul receives. What the soul desires is now prepared. The things God gives have always been. Behold them new and fresh and all at once in the eternal now.

A great philosopher declares that anything I see comes into my eyes purified and ghostly, and the light that comes into my eyes would never get into my soul but for a power above it. * There is a power in sight which is superior to the eyes set in the head

and more far-reaching than the heavens and earth. This power seizes all the things that come into the eyes and bears them up into the soul.* St Augustine says the spark comes nigher to the truth than any human knowledge. Light burns. They say that one is lighted from another. If so, the light is higher than the thing that burns. For instance, take a taper, extinguished but still glimmering and smoking, and hold it to the light; this will glance down and light the other. They say one fire burns another. But I traverse that. Fire, I ween, does burn itself. For one thing to burn another it must needs be above it, like heaven, for example, which burns not and is cold; natheless it sets on fire and that by dint of contact with the angels. For this the soul prepares by practice. Then she is fired from above. By the angelic light. He says to the servant, 'Go out and say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.' Then one said, 'I have bought a piece of ground, I cannot come.' These are they who still have worldly cares; they never taste this supper. A second said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen.' These five yoke, I fancy, stand for the five senses, for each sense is self and other and the very tongue is double. So in my story yesterday, when God said to the woman, 'Bring me thy husband,' she replied, 'I have none.' Whereupon quoth he, 'Thou sayest truly: thou hast had five, and him whom now thou hast is not thine husband.' The moral is that those who live the life of the five senses never taste this food. The third one said, 'I have married a wife, therefore I cannot come.' The soul is all-to single when she turns to God. As glancing down in this direction she is woman; but as seeing God in himself and visiting God at home she is the man. Of old it was forbidden to men to dress in woman's clothes or women man's. She is man when she penetrates into God, impartibly and without means. But when she peers forth at all she is woman. *As I have repeatedly said, the man in the soul is the intellect. When the soul looks straight up to God with her mind then the soul is the man, she is one and not two. But thinking and glancing down she dons female dress.* Quoth our Lord, 'Verily, these shall not taste of my supper'; and he commanded the servant, 'Go out into the streets and the lanes, into the highways and hedges—the narrower the wider and hedged about.' *For the more recollected the soul the less scattered she is and the more concentrated the wider her ken.* And some of her powers are hedged into one sense. The power I see with I do not hear with, nor with my power of hearing can I see. So with the rest (of the five senses). But on the other hand, the soul exists entire in every member; there is some power, therefore, not confined to place at all.

What is the servant? Angels and preachers (so says St Gregory). But, as it seems to me, the servant is a symbol of the spark. He says to the servant, 'Go out into the hedges and drive in thither these four kinds of folk: the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind: Verily, none other shall taste of my supper.' Let us throw off those three and rise up man, So help us God. Amen.

APPENDIX [1]

Synderesis

Oxford MS.	
The meat and drink I took a fortnight since has turned into my blood, my flesh, my nature. That is due to the power of the soul which brings it into my nature; it is as truly one with me as what was born with me.	Mark first in St Andrew his singleness of life and spiritual attainments whereby his soul was enabled, in her intellect, to ascend in the grace of God above all creatures into God.
So does the power of the Holy Ghost take the purest and lightest and highest and the spark of the soul and carry it up in the fire of love. Just like the sun's power: this lays hold in the roots of the tree of what is most pure and essential, drawing it up into the branches where it flowers. Even so is the spark of the soul being always drawn up in the light and in the Holy Ghost and conveyed into its source, becoming all-to one with God and searching him so throughly that it is more the same as God than food is with my life.	For the power of the Holy Ghost seizes the very highest and purest, the spark of the soul, and carries it up in the flame of love. Just as the power of the sun takes what is purest and subtlest out of the roots of the tree and draws it into the branches where it is in flower. Likewise the soul-spark is conveyed aloft into its source and is absorbed into God and is identified with God and is the spiritual light of God.
I say it is the light up in the soul where the soul nature	There are two lights in the soul, one is a light up in the

[1] See Zuchhold, No. 25. Parallel passages from an Oxford MS. of Eckhart's *Sermons* (Sievers' copy), and a sermon on St Andrew, evidently by the same hand, but bearing the name of Nikolaus von Landau. See also Jostes, Nos. 1 and 69.

touches angelic nature and passes into the angelic nature; it is from God and is pouring into the soul above nature.

Some say it is a power. It is not. A servant is mentioned, that is the intellect. There soul attains angelic nature and is the image of God.

In this light the soul has intercourse with angels and eke with those angels that are fallen into hell. There the spark subsists without any kind of suffering, turning straight up into God.

And withal she is like the good angels in this power, who work unceasingly in God, beholding God in God and returning all work into God.

This light the soul carries within her. The masters call it a power in the soul, this synderesis. It is not. It means something hanging to God and is ever averse from evil.

In hell it tends to God. It is

soul at the point where the soul is by nature in contact with the angels' nature. The other light is what I speak of. This light pours into the soul from on high, above nature.

Some call it a power of the soul. But it is not. It is called synderesis. To wit, the intellect which is a spark (or ray) of God the Father given by God out of his Godhead's God-nature, and is the form of God without any difference at all. In it she is in touch with the angelic nature.

In this light the soul has community with angels also those cast into hell. There the spark is free from all suffering and faces straight up into God and has precisely his nature.

And withal she has a somewhat, mind, in common with good angels who are constantly working in God and emanating from God and bearing back all their work into God and receiving God from God in God.

The intellect is like to these good angels, drinking God in his eternal savour, his living sweetness and in his own ground. She is sent away from God and is a light that (re)turns: the reflection of the divine nature which the soul has cast into her. The masters call it synderesis which is as much as to say something suspended from God all the time and which never does wrong.

In hell, says St Augustine, it

ever at war in the soul with the impure and the ungodly.

is turned to God. In the soul it wages constant war with things that are not pure and are not godly.

It looks neither to God's glory nor possessions. It presses up into the goal of divine essence and is the true God's messenger which leads and draws mankind to the celestial feast: et misit servum suum hora cene.

XXXIII

IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST

Si consurrexistis cum Christo, quæ sursum sunt, quærite, ubi Christus est in dextera dei sedens etc. (*Col.* 3_1). St Paul says: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above and set not your affections on the things on earth.' Then he goes on to say, 'ye are dead, and your life is hid in Christ with God in heaven.' Thirdly, there are the women seeking our Lord at the sepulchre. There they found an angel 'whose countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow,' and he asked the women, 'Whom seek ye? If ye seek Jesus who was crucified, he is not here.' For God is not in any place. Of God's lowest all creatures are full and his highest is nowhere. They answered him not, for they were disappointed at finding the angel and not God. God is not here or there, not in time or place.

St Paul says: 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' His first word expresses doubt. Some people rise by practising one virtue not another. Some, ignoble by nature, covet riches. Others, of a noble kind, care nothing for possessions but are bent on honour. One master says the virtues all hang upon each other. Though a person lean to the uses of one virtue rather than another they stand and fall together. Some people rise up all at once and yet rise not with Christ. That which is his rises once for all. On the other hand, we do find some who rise with Christ for good and all, but it will need a man of many parts to know in Christ the true resurrection. The masters say that with true resurrection there is no more death. Now there was never virtue so outstanding but someone might be found to have acquired it, and that by natural means, for natural powers work many signs and wonders, all the outward works found in the saints being found

too in the heathen. And that is why he speaks of being 'risen with Christ,' because he is on high, above the reach of any creature. What we have to do is to make the whole ascent.

There are three signs of our having risen altogether. The first: we seek those things that are above. The second: our affections are set on the things above. The third: we set not our affections on the things that are on earth. St Paul says: 'Seek those things that are above.' But where and in what way? King David tells us to 'seek the face of God.' What is common to a number must needs come from above. Above the fire itself there are the fire-givers like the heavens and the sun. Our best doctors teach that heaven is the locus of all things, and though it has itself no place, no natural place, yet it makes room for all things. My soul is undivided; also, it is entire in each member. Where my eye sees my ear does not hear; where my ear hears my eye sees not. My bodily hearing and sight are engineered in the mind. Light gives my eye a sense of colour which is lacking to the soul by reason of its being a defect. All the outward senses are alive to, if the spirit is to take it in, must be raised up by the angel: he imprints it in the upper portion of the soul.

The above designs and produces the below, so our doctors say. Even so St James asserts that 'Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above.' One who is risen to the full with Christ is known by his seeking for God above time. He seeks God above time who seeks him timeless. 'Seek those things that are above,' he says. Where shall we look? 'Where Christ is sitting on the right hand of his Father.' Where is Christ sitting? He is sitting nowhere; he is nowhere. If ye seek him anywhere ye shall not find him. A master has said that he who sees anything does not see God. Now *Christ* means *anointed*: the anointed of the Holy Ghost. *Sitting*, theologians say, symbolises rest and implies timelessness. Turning and changing lead nowhere: stopping we progress.

'I am God, I change not,' saith the Lord. 'Christ sitteth on the right hand of his Father.' The best gift of God, that is his right hand. With natural man, he starts his work with his right hand. Christ says, 'I am the door.' The first outburst and the first effusion God runs out in is his fusion into his Son, a process which in turn reduces him to Father. I said on one occasion that the door was the Holy Ghost: there he is poured out in blessings into all creatures. According to one master, the heavens receive from God direct. Another one says, No; God is spirit, pure light, and anything receiving straight from God must itself be spirit and pure light. The master denies that it is possible, in the first eruption, the first escape of God, that any corporal thing should

take it in: it must be either light or abstract mind. The heavens transcend time and are the cause of time. One philosopher maintains that the heavens are too lofty in their nature to stoop to be the cause of time. It is not in their nature that they are the cause of time: it is in their revolution that, timeless, they give rise to time, *i.e.* in the defection of the heavens. My looks are not my nature, they are accidents of nature: our soul is far above them, out of sight in God. And hence I say, not only above time but hid in God. That is what heaven means. Everything mortal spells deficiency: rise and fall, growth and decay. King David sings, 'A thousand years in God's sight are as a day that is past': for all the future and the past yonder are in the now. May we find this now, So help us God. Amen.

XXXIV [1]

ST DIONYSIUS SPEAKS OF THREE KINDS OF LIGHT

St Dionysius speaks of three kinds of light the soul has who attains to pure knowledge of God. The first is natural, the second ghostly and the third divine.

Now consider what this natural light is and how far it helps her to know God. The soul innately knows that existing things are not of themselves. But there must be one thing that is of itself and from none but itself: whatever that is it created all things.

Further, the soul innately understands that the good which is scattered among things is as a whole in the one cause of things. Also, it is natural to the soul to love each thing so far as it is good. And when her natural intellect stumbles on the cause of things, whose good, broadcast in things, is as a whole in their common cause, then this natural perception provokes in her a natural love towards this cause of all things.

All creatures are infirm and changeful, not in reality (which is exempt) but in the first stages of perfection. St Augustine says, The soul cannot dwell for long upon one thought but lapses from it into others. Neither can she entertain several thoughts at once; she must leave one and die to it to quicken in another. But God has no community with creatures, wherefore it is evident that there is no deficiency in him. He has no community with creatures; but this applies alone to God, and in so far as the soul is like him she is without defect. By nature the soul knows and loves God above all things.

The second light is ghostly; it originates in faith. But the

[1] Jostes, No. 69.

whole content of faith is beyond the scope of the nature of the soul. The faith is, that three Persons are in the same nature and the same nature in three Persons. No natural light or intellect is adequate for this, for no natural light affords a likeness of it. What the three Persons do, or are capable of doing, is the product of their unity; for though there are three Persons they do not act as three but they function as one God. That is a ghostly light whereby the soul in faith can actually see that this is so, (a light) such as her natural mind could never give her.

The third light is the light of glory, divine light. This the soul receives into the chief power of the soul. In this light we see God with nothing between. So far as this light sinks into her chief power so far is God immediately perceived. In this light the soul divines the noble nature of all things in God, for all that ever issued forth or is issuing forth or ever shall, has in God eternal life and being; not defective as it is in creatures but as his very being for it is his nature. God has his own being not from naught, he has it of his proper nature which in itself is truly aught though naught to the intelligence of creature.

This nature is causeless, therefore it is unfathomable except to causeless understanding. Creaturely intelligence is finite, so it has a cause; hence it cannot fathom causeless mind, not Christ nor his humanity. Where God is beholding his own nature, which is groundless, it is incomprehensible except to groundless understanding. This understanding is none other than his nature is itself: only God in his own nature can conceive himself. This conception is the understanding wherein, self-revealed, God manifests in light that no man can attain to. As St Paul says, 'God dwells in light unapproachable.'

XXXV

STAND IN THE GATE

Dominus dicit: sta in porta domus domini et prædica verbum istud (*Jer.* 7_2). The Lord says, 'Stand in the gate of God's house and proclaim his word, extol his word.' The heavenly Father speaks one Word and that he speaks eternally and in this Word expends he all his might: his entire God-nature he utters in this Word and the whole of creatures. This Word lies hidden in the soul unnoticed and beyond our ken, and were it not for rumours in the ground of hearing we should never heed it; but all sounds and voices have to cease and silence, perfect stillness, reign. This is a meaning I will not pursue.

Stand in the gate. Who stands there, his limbs are orderly

disposed. He is about to speak; the head of the soul is held stiffly up. The ordered is subject to an order which is higher than itself. Creatures are not of the order of God till the soul's natural light, wherein they get their being, overshadows them, and the angelic light overshadows the light of the soul preparing and adapting it for divine light to work in; for God works not in corporal things, he works in the eternal. That is why the soul must be recollected and integrated to the spirit. It is there God works and there all works are agreeable to God. Never a thing is to God's liking unless it is wrought there.

Stand in the gate in the house of God, that is, his unity of essence. One is best kept by itself. So the unity stands by God and keeps God together, adding nothing. There he sits in his own presence, in his is-ness, all in himself, nowhere out of himself. But as he melts he runs out. He melts and runs out in his goodness which, as I have explained, consists of knowledge and love. Knowledge is the flux, for knowledge is hotter than love. But two are better than one. And this knowledge is laden with love. Love is fooled and caught by kindness: in love I hang about the gate turning a blind eye to the authentic vision. Even stones have love, a love that seeks the ground. If I insist on goodness in the first effusion and seize this at the point where it is good, then I shall seize the gate, not God himself. Knowledge is the better, as being the head and front of love. Love is the will to, the intention. No single thought attaches to this knowledge: wholly detached and self-forsaken it runs all bare into the arms of God and grasps him in himself.

Lord it is meet that thy house be holy and a house of prayer. What is prayer? It is the practice of pure being and glorying therein. What is the glory? The arraying of man in the likeness of God in him. But while any image exists in the soul there is no glorifying God therein, as in a prayer-house, in the length of days. I do not mean days here: when I say length without length that means the length; breadth without breadth means the breadth. When I speak of all time I mean above time and above it, as I have explained, there is no here or now.

The woman asked our Lord when we ought to pray. Our Lord replied, 'The hour cometh but not yet, when true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth.' For God is a spirit and they must worship in spirit and in truth that which is truth itself. Which we are not: true we may be, but there is false mixed with it. For ye do not exist in God in that first eruption where truth comes spouting from its source. In the gate of God's house the soul has to stand and trumpet forth his Word. Everything which is in the soul has to utter praise, standing,

deaf to all the world, in silence and in peace, as I described the angels as sitting there with God. In that choir of wisdom and of burning God on a sudden declares himself to the soul plighting her his troth for good and all. It is the Father begetting his Son and in his Word he takes such huge delight, so fond he is of it, that he never stops but goes on pledging his Word the whole time: timelessly, that is to say. And here we must observe that the house God plights his troth in is deserted: bare spirit, above time. Meet for thine house are holiness and praise, there must be nothing there that does not praise thee.

Our theologians ask, what praises God? Likeness does. Any likeness to God that lives in the soul redounds to the glory of God. Things at all different from God do not glorify God. A portrait, for example, reflects credit on the painter who embodies in it his dearest conception of his art and makes it the image of himself. The likeness of the portrait praises the author without words. Of little worth is spoken praise or praying with the lips. Our Lord said on one occasion, 'Ye pray, not knowing what prayer is. There shall come again true prayers, praying to my Father not in words but in spirit and in truth.' What is prayer? Dionysius says, 'The mind's ascent to God, that is what prayer means.' It is a heathen who observes that where spirit is and unity and eternity there God will be at work. Where flesh is warring against spirit; where disruption is warring against union; where time is warring with eternity, there God works not: he can do nothing with it. Further, any pleasure we may have, or contentment or comfort, has to go. To worship God she must be holy, summed up to a whole, one spirit naught beside: all wrought up at once into the eternal eternity on high, transcending all. Not all creatures which have been created, it is not them I mean, but all he could do an he would. This soul must transcend. While there is anything above the soul; while there is anything in front of and in God, she can never enter his ground in the length of days.

Now, according to St Augustine, when the light of the soul eclipses creatures, it is dawn; when the angelic light eclipses the light of the soul and devours it, then it is broad day. David says, 'The righteous man mounts up and up to the perfect day.' His path is fair and smooth and pleasant and familiar. And when the psychic and angelic lights are swallowed up in the light divine, he calls that high noon. Now day is at its longest, in its prime, when the sun at its zenith pours its light into the stars and the stars pour it into the moon. These are members of the solar system. And even so the light of God embraces the angelic light and that of the soul, an orderly array, an ascending scale steadily rising in the day, all praising God in chorus. There

is nothing over that is not praising God : they are all alike, the liker the fuller of God, all lauding God together. The Lord said, 'I will abide with thee in thine house.' Dear God, we do beseech thee abide thou with us here, to the end that we abide with thee eternally. Amen.

XXXVI

YOUNG MAN, ARISE !

Adolescens, tibi dico : surge (*Luc.* 7_{14}). Our Lord went to a city called Naim, and many of his disciples went with him and much people. And when they came under the gate there was a dead man carried out, a youth, the only son of a widow. And our Lord came and touched the bier whereon the body lay, and said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise !' The life spake life into the dead. The youth arose and straightway took up his parable : his resurrection by the eternal Word.

He went to a city. I say, that means the soul which is well ordered and fortified in the Holy Ghost and, having set a watch for sin and shut out multiplicity, is safe and sound in Jesus : encompassed and walled round by the light of God. As the prophet hath it, 'God is the wall round Zion.' The eternal wisdom says, 'In the holy and in the sanctified city I shall have like repose.' Nothing is so restful, so unifying, as *like* ; hence *same* and *in* and *near* and *by*. That soul is holy in whom is God alone and wherein no creature finds rest. He says, 'I shall have like repose in the holy and in the sanctified city.' All sanctity is of the Holy Ghost. This nature nothing transcends : beginning with the lowest it works it up into the highest. Philosophers say air only turns to fire when it is rarefied and hot. The Holy Ghost seizes the soul and clarifying her in its light and grace draws her up to the supreme. He says, 'In the sanctified city I shall alike repose.' As the soul rests in God so God reposes in her. If she rests partly in him then he rests partly in her ; if she rests wholly in him he rests wholly in her. That is why the eternal wisdom says, 'I shall repose alike (or equally).'

According to philosophers, the green and yellow colours of the rainbow merge into one another too gradually for any eye to follow, however keen its sight. And nature works so gradually when it resolves itself into the first effusion, this is so homogeneous with the angels, that Moses durst not write thereof for fear of the faint-hearted, lest they should worship them : so much the same they are with the first emanation. One high authority definitely states that the topmost angel is so nigh the first eruption, he has in him so much of God's likeness and God's might, that he it is who cares

for and looks after this whole world as well as all the angels who are under him. The moral of which is, that God the high, the pure, and the impartible is operative in his highest creature who exerts his power, as a viceroy rules the land in the name of the king. He says, 'In the holy and in the sanctified city alike do I repose.'

As I was saying lately, the gate or door that, melting, God flows out by, is goodness. Essence is self-absorbed: not an effusion but an inner fusion. And unity is one and self-contained: aloof from everything and free from outside intercourse. But goodness is the melting and running out of God: his diffusion to the whole of creatures. Essence is the Father, unity the Son, and goodness is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost seizes the soul (the sanctified city) at its purest, at its highest, and hales it up into its first source, which is the Son, and the Son bears it on into his source, his Father namely, into the ground, into the first, where the Son has his being; where the eternal wisdom is in like repose in the holy and in the sanctified city, in the innermost.

He says our Lord 'went to a city called Naim.' *Naim* means son of a dove, which suggests simplicity. The soul shall never rest in her potential power (or nature) till she is simplified to God. It also signifies a flow of water and implies passivity of soul towards sin and imperfection. The disciples symbolise the divine light which shall flow in and flood the soul. The 'much people' are the virtues whereof I lately spoke. The soul shall ascend in fiery aspiration and pass above the manifold merit of the angels to the greater virtues. So she comes 'under the gate' and enters into love and unity: the gate whence they bore out the youth, the widow's son. 'Our Lord came and touched the bier whereon the body lay.' How he came and how he touched I will not dwell upon but upon the words, 'Young man, Arise!'

He was the son of a widow: her man was dead. Hence dead too was her son, the only son of the soul, the will and all the powers of the soul, for all these are one in the innermost mind, and mind (*i.e.* intellect) is the man in the soul. Her husband was dead, therefore her son was dead also. 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!' When the Word addresses the soul and the soul replies in the living Word, then the Son is alive in the soul.

Philosophers ask which is the better, the power of plants or the power of words or the power of stones? Let us consider. Words derive their power from the original Word. But the abuse and multiplication of words impairs their force. Plants possess great power. I have heard that a serpent was fighting with a weasel when the weasel ran off and fetched a little plant which, wrapping in another plant, it launched upon the serpent and, breaking asunder, the serpent lay dead. What endowed the

weasel with this wisdom? The virtue of plant-lore. Therein lies much wisdom. Words, too, have prodigious power: with words we can do wonders. And stones again are very potent in virtue of the likeness wrought in them by the starry and celestial force. Like works in like most mightily, and that is why the soul, by raising herself up in the natural light, can get into angelic light and in the angelic light enter the light divine and so stand in the three lights, at the cross-ways, at the vertex, where the lights run into one. There the eternal Word is saying life in her, and there the soul is living and gainsaying in the Word. So may we be gainsayers in the eternal Word, God helping us. Amen.

XXXVII

YOUNG MAN, ARISE!

Adolescens, tibi dico: surge (*Luc.* 7_{14}). We read in the gospel that a woman came to our Lord Jesus Christ. She said, 'Sir, I am a widow, and had an only son who is dead.' Our Lord said, 'Young man, Arise!'

The widow, this woman whose husband was dead, and her only son. By this woman is meant the understanding, her husband is the man of the soul, and the youth the highest intellect, for that is the young man. When the soul is dead in imperfection, the higher mind awakening into understanding cries to God for grace. Then God gives it divine light and it becomes self-knowing. Therein it sees God. I said, intellect alone can receive divine light. The other powers of the soul are instruments and agents for raising the intellect to its maximum lucidity.

It is a question with the theologians, which ranks higher, understanding or love? One school says understanding, the other school, love. It is a lively subject of debate. Understanding says: How canst thou love a thing thou dost not know? Love says: What avails thee thy knowledge without love? Loveless, thou shalt never find eternal happiness. Understanding says: I am born in the clear light of self-knowledge. Love says: Great knowledge without love is vain. Understanding says: Give place, thou are only my slave: thou dost help me to rise and remainest. Love says: I am the good that God is himself. Knowledge says: High is thy claim: without me thou dost fall to the ground. Love says: It would be well for thee to bear me more in mind. Understanding says: I can rise higher not fettered to thee; my vision is clearer, nay, I want none of thee. I have what I will the while I know what hitherto I have descried and into which I now have flowed to abide for aye in perfect

unity. Here, I am above love and transcend all activity. Here I have intuition; and my real knowledge of all things, all I believed, is now come true. Faith and hope and all the powers of the soul remain, they can go no further. True love says: I must abide with thee, for I am eternal. Our sisters stay behind, that is but meet: they are our servants who have brought thee to the actual enjoyment of thy eternal happiness.—Now comes the highest intellect, that which receives all things direct from God, and says: I have conceived the sovran good wherein is naught save unity. Intuition says: I shall cleave to thee, my place is at thy side. Intellect says: Knowledge and love must remain behind. Intuition says: It is meet I should enjoy what I have divined. Highest intellect replies: What you have brought me to and which I hitherto have known, now knows itself in me. Wherefore I find I need none else. All created things must remain behind with all I ever was. I stand before my cause.

To go back to the widow and our Lord's command, 'Young man, Arise!' we must bear in mind that anything not far from birth is young. Thus it is with intellect as standing in the presence of its cause; oblivious of the aids to its ascent it fondly weens it has been there for aye and there shall eternally remain. That may not be.

Then take the words: 'by the widow is meant the understanding, by her son the intellect, and by her husband the man of the soul.' Now you must know, when the man of the soul begins to rise, the masters say it is another man. By which you must not understand it is another soul: it is another being of the soul; the old mode is done, it is dead. The soul assuming her real mode stands in her virgin innocence. The man of the soul, transcending his angelic mode and guided by the intellect, pierces to the source whence flowed the soul. Intellect itself is left outside with all named things. So the soul is merged into pure unity. This we call the man of the soul, and, having reached this consummation, he has no need of any help. What he did heretofore God now does in him. God knows him as he knew him, God loves him as he loved him. God is doing all the work and the man of the soul is absolutely idle.

When a man has reached this point we may well say, this man is God and man. All Christ has by nature he has won by grace. His body is filled with the noble nature of the soul, which she receives from God, with divine light, wherefore we may truly cry, Behold, a man divine! Pity them, my children, they are from home and no one knows them. Let those in quest of God be careful lest appearances deceive them in these people who are peculiar and hard to place; no one rightly knows them but those in whom the

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same light shines. Namely, the light of truth. Yet it may well be that wayfarers to that same good, but who have not yet reached it, will come across these perfect of whom we have been speaking. Believe me, did I know one such, and had a convent-full of gold and precious stones, I would give the whole of it for a single fowl for him to eat. Further I declare, if all the things God ever made were mine, I would forwith give them all for the enjoyment of that man, and rightly, for they are all his. Nay, more I say: his, too, is God in the fullness of his power, and if there stood before me all who in imperfection are anhungered, I would not withhold from that man's need a single feather of the fowl, though I might feed that multitude. For, you must remember, with one in imperfection, anything he eats or drinks will drag him down and make him prone to sin. But not the virtuous man: what he eats and drinks he raises up in Christ to the Father. So look well to yourselves.

You are familiar with Christ's words, 'Where two are gathered together in my name I will be with them.' Here Christ is referring to the harmonious union of the body and the soul, where body wants nothing except what the soul wills. God is with these: they are the people we have been speaking of. Here the man of the soul is in actual possession of his eternal happiness, and, being docked of all her powers, the soul encounters no sort of opposition. I warn you, you must keep a sharp look out, for they are difficult to tell; thus if they should need it, while other people fast they will be eating, while other people watch they will be sleeping, while other folks are praying they will hold their peace. In short, the things they say and do seem unaccountable, for what God makes obvious to persons on the way to their eternal happiness is foreign to those that have arrived there. These have no wants whatever: they are rich in the possession of a city of their own. I call that my own which is mine eternally and no one can take from me. These people, you must know, do most valuable work. They work within, you understand, in the man of the soul. Blessed is the kingdom wherein dwells one of them; in an instant they will do more lasting good than all the outward actions ever done. See ye withhold not aught of theirs. May we recognise these people and loving God in them, with them possess the city they have won. So help us God. Amen.

XXXVIII

PEACE

Stetit Jesus in medio discipulorum et dixit: pax etc. (*Luc.* 24_{35}, *Joh.* 20_{19}). St John tells us in his gospel that 'on the first day of

the week, at evening, when the doors were shut, came our Lord and stood in the midst of the disciples and said: Peace be unto you!' and again, 'Peace be unto you!' and a third time, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost!' Now the evening never comes unless morning and midday have gone before. We say that the middle of the day is warmer than the evening. But in so far as evening takes in middle-day and stores up its heat, it is the warmer, when, too, before the evening there goes a whole bright day. Late in the year, again, after the summer solstice, when the sun is drawing nigh to earth, the evenings will grow warm. But midday never comes till morning goes nor evening until noon has passed away. The moral of which is, that when the divine light breaks forth in the soul, getting brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, then morning does not vanish before noon nor noon ere eventide: they close up to one. So the evening is warm. There is perfect day in the soul when all the soul is full of light divine. But it is evening in the soul, as I have said before, when the light of this world fades and the soul goes in to rest.

God. said, 'Peace!' and 'Peace!' again, and 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost!' Jacob the patriarch came to a place, in the evening, and putting underneath his head some stones which lay about, he sank to rest. In his sleep he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven with angels ascending and descending and God leaning down over the top of the ladder. This place Jacob slept in had no name. Which is as much as to say: the Godhead alone is the place of the soul, and is nameless. Concerning this our doctors say: a thing which is another's place must be above it; as heaven is the place of all things and fire is the place of air and air the place of water and water, partially, the place of earth and earth is not a place. An angel is a heavenly place, and any angel who has got the least drop more of God than any other is the place, the habitation, of that other, the most exalted angel being the place, the room, the measure of the rest while he himself is without measure. But although he is without measure, natheless God is his measure.

Jacob rested in the place which is nameless. By not naming it it is named. On getting to this nameless place the soul will rest: where all things are being God in God, there shall she rest. The abode of the soul, which God is, is unnamed. I say, God is unspoken. But St Augustine says that God is not unspoken; were he unspoken, that even would be speech and he is more silence than speech. One of our most ancient philosophers who found the truth long, long before God's birth, ere ever there was Christian faith at all as it is now, to him (I say) it seemed that what he could manage to utter of things only conjured up within him

something monstrous and unreal and therefore he refused to speak at all. Not even would he say, give me meat or give me drink. He declined to mention things because he could not say them as perfect as they sprang from their first cause: he chose rather to be dumb and to make known his wants by pointing with his finger. How much more does it beseem us, if he knew not the way to talk of things, to be absolutely mute concerning him who is the origin of all things.

We say that God is a spirit. Not so. If God were really a spirit he would be spoken. According to St Gregory, we cannot rightly speak of God at all. Anything we say of him is bound to be a stammering. This place which is not named, wherein all creatures thrive and bloom in orderly array, this habitat of all creatures, is gotten suddenly out of the ground of this orderly place, the seat of the soul proceeding out of this ground.

Jacob wanted to rest: mark you, he wanted to rest. Whoso resteth in God his rest is will-free. We say that will is without habit. Will is free, it takes nothing from matter. In this sense it is freer than intellect, and some rash people pouncing upon this would put it above knowledge. That is not so. Intellect also is free despite that intellect does take from matter and from corporal things in the locality of soul, for, as I pointed out on Easter Eve, various of the soul-powers are in link with the five senses, for instance, sight and hearing, which convey to them the things we know. A master says: 'God would never choose that eye or ear should sense what crowns the summit of the soul: none other than the nameless place, which is the place of all things.' It gives a fair reflection, and is useful in that way, but is marred by colour and by sound and corporal things. It is only by the senses that the soul is roused and the idea of wisdom naturally imprinted in her. Plato says, and with him St Augustine: The soul has all knowledge within, and all we can do from without is but an awakening of knowledge.—Jacob rested in the evening. Let us pray ever for the now; 'tis but a little thing we ask, just for one evening. May it be granted us, So help us God. Amen.

XXXIX

EVERY GOOD GIFT

Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum descendit a patre luminum (*Jac.* 1_{17}). My Latin quotation is from the Epistle of St James. He says, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of lights. With him is no variableness nor shadow of time (or, temporal

reflection).' These two terms he uses, good gift and perfect gift, refer to different things, so our masters say. *Datum* befalls in time; *donum* has no thought of time. *Datum* is a matter of self-seeking, but *donum* is free and unconditioned and wholly without why. A perfect gift is one betokening nothing but good-will. The perfect gift is therefore free and unconditional. The perfect gift is a friendly offering, essentially a giving albeit not bestowed. According to our masters, gifts are perfect in so far as they are love-bearers; but good gifts are like hucksters and have ever their price. In the words of one of the saints, 'Blood of the Holy Ghost and its glow is in one sense eternal and in another temporal.' If my face were eternal and were held before a mirror it would be received in the mirror as a temporal thing albeit eternal in itself. The Holy Ghost has its glow. The eternal glow of his eternal blood is the perfect gift; when the soul is worthy and receives the same it turns to the good gift. Meaning to say that this gift which is temporal in us is in itself eternal. God would give us not only his good gift; he is ready to bestow on us his perfect gift as well, to wit, the Holy Ghost itself. Hence his words, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of lights.'

From another point of view he means, so it appears to me, that the Holy Ghost is the perfect gift only as working in the intellect. As proceeding forth in the practice of good works, albeit godly, or withal in thought, it becomes good gift. It is the perfect gift so far as the soul is living in God, immanent in the light and savour of God, hanging motionless in his perfect light-nature. As St Paul says, 'Ye shall taste the things that are above.' The Holy Ghost is the Gift wherein ye abide in the perfection of light. The soul suspended in pure intellectual light is enjoying the things that are above. Our masters teach that corporeal things are called matter. We say, the light of intellect shuns matter, but albeit in itself wholly devoid of things it still has potentiality and that for matter. He says, 'Taste the things that are above,' not, that are above the earth. We have a saying, So far from matter so far pure intelligence. When in the light the grey tint of the cloth assails my eye, I see it. If it were intellect I should see nothing. We recognise another power as being far removed from matter. How so? Suppose I saw a man twenty years ago, he may now be dead, but still I have a likeness of his form as though he stood before my eyes. This power needs no matter, but it has the imperfection of receiving from matter—in forms, that is to say. On the other hand, the light, intelligence, transcends what is already matter or is so potentially. While the soul abides in God, suspended in his

intellectual light she has no material objectivity nor likeness nor potentiality. He says, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of lights.'

What does he mean by calling it 'good gift?' Betwixt those things whose being-and-doing is in eternity and the things whose being and doing are in time there needs must be some middle term. He means that it is God, this thing whose being-and-doing is the perfect gift; so the being-and-doing of the perfect gift is in eternity. But the being-and-doing of the good gift are in time; which of course must mean that the soul is on the way to eternal life. Why does he promise both good and perfect gifts? When God bestows the Holy Ghost itself, whose being-and-activity is in eternity, that is his perfect gift which, peering forth in thought, is his good gift.

St Augustine says, and the masters too, the soul has some capacity which is open towards God and into which he alone can speak, whereas creature speaks into another. Into this highest power, which is addressed by God alone, he utters wisdom, which is his perfect gift. But the other one that creature speaks to is satisfied with reason. The same gift is perfect, being timeless, and good as perfecting the things of time. What is temporal in us is eternal in God. *Datum* in us is *donum* in God. What is mixed and temporal and good in us becomes, if we follow it up, perfect in God. What we are able to receive of him is infinitely small compared to what he is. Whatever else one may know one does not know God.

He says, 'he comes down from on high from the Father of lights.' What does he mean? The Son and the Holy Ghost have one source in the Father, and the Holy Ghost and the Son are one light and they are both of them lights. God is the Father of lights. St Augustine tells what the soul is tasting in God. He explains that in that food the tongue is savouring the invisible light; he says the soul is not a thing of sensible appetites and pleasures; she has a hidden energy and luminosity.

According to the masters, the angels are a light: God is the entire light, with whom is no change nor time nor turning. The nobler the creature the more akin to God. All creaturely being-and-doing is in time. But the angels, who are higher, are in essence timeless and without alteration in themselves. Their wonted activities in God are free from time, but in that they look down they have an aspect (or shadow) of time. But in none of his works has God any shadow of time nor of change. So far as there is no changing, no shadow in man, so far he compares with divinity. Creature has ever this and that, one thing and another; but in God exists neither this nor that, neither one nor tother;

and unless there be in us what two and two are, what is one plus other, the happenings within us remain just good and ill. There is no one or other with the Father of lights. May we be given every good gift and every perfect gift wherein we are exalted above time to the Father of lights with whom is no variableness nor temporal nature, So help us God. Amen.

XL

EVERY GOOD GIFT

Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum de sursum est descendens a patre luminum (*Jac.* 1_{17}). St James says in his epistle, ' Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above from the Father of lights.'

Now ye must know that people who resign themselves to God and diligently seek to do his will, to these, I say, whatever God may send will be the best. As God lives, be sure it is the very best, and there can be no better way. Some other may seem better yet is not so good for thee; God wills this way and not that, therefore this way is bound to be the best. Sickness or poverty, hunger or thirst, what God does give thee or what he does not, that is the very best for thee, aye, though it be fervour or the interior life which, alas! thou dost lack. Whatever thou hast or hast not, accept it all to the glory of God, and then whatever he sends thee will be for the best.

Peradventure thou wilt say, How can I tell whether it is God's will or not? If it were not God's will it would not be. Neither sickness nor anything else dost thou have excepting God wills. And therefore knowing it to be God's will thou oughtest to rejoice in it and to be so content therewith that any pain shall lose its sting for thee; aye, even in extremity of pain to feel the least affliction or distress were altogether wrong: accept it from God as the best since it is bound to be the best thing for thee. It is of the essence of him to will what is best. Let me then will it too; there is nothing that should please me better. Supposing there was someone I tried hard to please and whom I knew for certain liked me in a grey coat more than any other; doubtless that coat would please me too, and I should prefer it to any of the rest however nice they were. Given then my wish to please a certain person, the things I know he wishes both of word and deed are the things that I would do and those alone. Judge for yourselves then of your love! If ye do indeed love God ye will like nothing better than that which best enables him to work his will in us. However great may seem the pain or the privation,

except thou take delight therein as great as in thine ease and plenty, it is wrong.

One thing I am wont to say, and it is the fact, that daily we cry in our *pater noster*, Lord, thy will be done! and when his will is done we grumble and are discontented at it. Whatever he does let us deem that the best and like that best of all. Those who do take it as the best always remain tranquil. Sometimes ye will say, Alas! 'twere better something else had happened, or, had that not been, things would have turned out better. As long as thou dost think so thou wilt never be at peace. Accept it all for the best. That is the first moral of our text.

There is another meaning, mark it well. He says 'every gift.' The very best and the very highest, these are innate gifts and in him the most innate of all. God gives nothing so gladly as great gifts. Once in this very place I said, God likes forgiving big sins more than small ones. The bigger they are the gladder he is and the quicker to forgive them. It is the same with graces, gifts. and virtues: the greater they are the greater his pleasure in bestowing them, for the giving of largesse is his nature. The bigger the things and the better the more shall ye get. [The noblest creatures are the angels who are minds and nothing else; they have no carnal nature and they are in number infinitely more than all the corporal things.]

Once upon a time I laid it down that to be properly expressed a thing must proceed from within, moved by its form: it must come, not in from without but out from within. It really lives in the recesses of the soul. There all things are present to thee, subjectively alive and active in their zenith, in their prime. Why art thou unaware of it? Because thou art not at home. The more noble a thing the more common it is. Feeling I have in common with the beasts and life in common with the trees. Being is still more innate in me and that I have in common with all creatures. Heaven exceeds all neighbouring things, and it is nobler also. The nobler the thing the bigger it is and the more universal. Love is as noble as it is universal. It does indeed seem hard, as our Lord commands, to love our evenchristians as ourselves. The unenlightened say that we ought to love them just the same as they love themselves. Not so. We ought to love them no more than our own selves, which is not difficult. If you come to consider, it is matter for reward more than a behest. The command seems hard but the reward desirable. He who loves God as he ought and must (whether he would or not), and as all creatures love him, will love his evenchristian as himself, rejoicing in his joys and hoping for his honour as much as for his own and treating the other like himself. By this means he is always happy

whether in honour or in need, just as though he were in heaven and withal has more enjoyments than the blessings of himself alone.

The plain truth is that it is wrong for thee to hold thine honour dearer than another's. Remember, an thou seekest aught of thine thou never shalt find God, for thou art not seeking God merely. Thou art seeking for something with God, making a candle of God, as it were, with which to find something, and then, having found it, throwing the candle away. Thus shalt thou fare: aught that thou findest with God is naught, whatsoever it be, whether profit or wages or the interior life or anything else: naught dost thou seek and naught shalt thou find. Thou shalt find naught because it is naught thou dost seek; that is all. All creatures are a mere naught. I say not they are small, are aught: they are absolutely naught. A thing without being is not (or is naught). Creatures have no real being, for their being consists in the presence of God. If God turned away for an instant they would all perish. I have sometimes said, and it is true, that he who has gotten the whole world plus God has gotten no more than God by himself. Having all creatures without God is no more than having one fly without God; just the same, no more nor less.

This is a true saying. The man who gives a thousand marks of gold for the making of convents or of churches is doing a great deed. But that man gives a great deal more who gives a thousand marks for naught: he is doing far more than the other. When God created all creatures he could not move in them, they were so small and narrow. But the soul he made so like himself, so nearly his own peer, on purpose to give himself to her: nothing else that he could give her would she care for in the least. God must give me himself for my own as he is his own, or I shall get naught, nor is aught else to my taste. Whoso receives him thus outright must wholly have renounced himself and gone out of himself; he gets straight from God all that he has, as his own just as much as it is his, and our Lady and all the habitants of heaven. All this is meet and proper to this man. Those who have renounced themselves and are in this sense dead unto themselves receive the same, no less.

Thirdly, the term 'Father of lights.' The word *father* implies to us a son. *Father* stands for abstract generation, and is an expression for the universal principle of life. The Father generates his Son in his eternal intellect and the Father generates his Son in the soul just as he does in his own nature; he bears his Son in the soul as her own, and his existence depends on his bringing his Son to birth in the soul, whether he would or no. On one occasion

I was asked what the Father is doing in heaven? I said, He is begetting his Son, an act he so delights in and which pleases him so well that he does nothing else but generate his Son, and these twain are flowering with the Holy Ghost. When the Father gives birth to his Son in me I am his very Son and not another: we are another in manhood, true, but there I am the Son himself and no other. As sons we are lawful heirs. He who knows the truth wots this right well. The word *father* connotes just begetting and having of sons. We are sons in his Son and are the Son himself.

Now consider the words, 'they come from above.' I said, referring to this very thing, Whoso desires to receive from above must needs be below in true humility. Know in good sooth, if a thing is not right underneath it receives nothing nor conceives nothing: not a single thing however small. Hast thou an eye to thine own self or to any thing or person, then thou art not right under and thou receivest nothing; but being brought right under thou receivest all at once and in perfection. It is God's nature to give, and his existence depends on his giving to us when we are under. If we are not, then we get nothing: we do him violence and kill him. Or if unable so to do to him, we do it to ourselves as far as in us lies. If thou wouldst really give him all, see to it thou dost put thyself right humbly under God, raising up God in thy heart and in thy understanding. The Father sent his son into the world in the fullness of time of the soul, when she had finished with time. When the soul is free from time and place the Father sends his Son into the soul. This is the explanation of the words, 'the best gifts come from above from the Father of lights.' Let us be ready to receive these same best gifts, So help us God the Father of lights. Amen.

XLI

A LITTLE AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME

Modicum videbitis me et modicum non videbitis (*Joh.* $16_{17,\ 19}$). I quote in Latin from the Gospel of St John a saying of our Lord to his disciples. The translation runs, 'A modicum, a little, ye shall see me and a modicum, a little, and ye shall not see me.' The disciples were ignorant and did not understand. They were saying to each other, 'We know not what he means.' So St John relates, and he was there. Follows a parable which I will not dwell on. Then, knowing what was in their hearts he says quite plainly, 'I shall see you again and your joy shall be full.'

Now, to my mind this saying will bear four interpretations.

More or less the same in wording but widely different in meaning. The kernel of the prime conception and of eternal happiness is knowledge. One theologist who spoke at Paris insisted with loud fulminations that this is not so. Then up and said another one, better than the best they have at Paris: Sir, you are very positive, but in the gospel did not God declare the very thing that you denounce so roundly? Our Lord's words are, 'This is eternal life, to know thee the only true God'—'A little and ye shall see me.' Meaning to say, ye must get to look upon everything in you as little and of small account if ye are ever to see God. It follows that we must observe minutely what will help and hinder divine knowledge. However small what comes from God, if treated rightly it recurs, it comes again, for we have one divine thing of our own that we can work with as with our own soul; not that I work and God looks on: I, as it were, co-operate with my own tool which is mine and in me. Thus man being lifted up in time shall see God out of himself. I have sometimes said, the time St Paul saw nothing he saw God. Now I say something better: when St Paul saw all nothing he saw God: when he saw all things as nothing he saw God, and what God means to say is this: when things are all reduced to naught in you then ye shall see God.

Again, he says, 'a little and ye shall not see me.' While time and world, which is little, is within you, ye shall not see me. The angel swore on his eternal life that when this life is done there shall be no more time. And in his gospel St John quite plainly states, 'the world was made by him and they knew him not.' In fine then, to quote a heathen doctor, world-and-time is a little thing. It is out of world-and-time that we see God.

Thirdly. He said, 'a little and ye see me not,' as though to say: the very smallest thing that is foreign to the soul will prevent her seeing God. For heaven is shut to strangers; even an angel from another heaven would not succeed in getting in, for it is not his. Why has my mouth, my ear, no sense of heaven? Because they are not like it. St Bernard says, 'My eye is like the heavens in being round and clear and placed high in the body, nor can it brook the entry of any foreign matter.' Before my eye can see the painting on the wall this must be filtered through the air and in a still more tenuous form be borne into my phantasy, to be assimilated by my understanding. These properties, both, the soul must needs possess; and this likeness, how subtile soever it may be, with its suggestiveness, its hint of sin, the soul rejects as foreign to herself. If God himself were foreign to the soul she would have none of him. What the eye perceives has to be conveyed to it by means, in images. If there were no means we

should see nothing. If an angel sees another angel or anything that God has made, he does so by some means. But himself and God he sees immediately. If my soul knows an angel she knows him by some means and in an image, an image imageless, not in an image such as they are here. Soul and angel are material things compared with God. Angelic knowledge, anything created, is a means. Which God wholly lacks: he is known without means, without little. For my soul to know God with nothing between thou must be with me and I with thee.

I will now suggest a meaning quite other than these three. 'While ye are little ye do not see me. To see me ye have to grow great.' Intellect is great indeed, yet small compared with the light of God. Our Lord upbraided his apostles saying, 'There is still in you but a little light.' They were not devoid of light, but it was weak, the light of grace, the brightest thing God ever made or ever could have made. And after all the soul is small so long as she is still in grace. Sometime or other the soul must rise in grace. If grace is not yet overcome, the soul has still to ascend in grace and, being perfected, to transcend grace: then she sees God.

Fourthly, 'and ye shall not see me': being poor in light and grace ye cannot see God. One must abound in light and grace before one can see God. Grace is a surpassing light, superangelic. In grace we can see God but from afar. While grace exists in us as grace we are not able to see God. 'Ye do not see me because I am going to my Father.' While the soul progresses God remains unseen. While we are on the way to God we have not gotten him. With finding God all progress ends, as our Lord said to St Mary Magdalene, 'Touch me not, I am not yet ascended in thee to my Father.' While God is ascending in the soul and has not reached the zenith, we are unable to see God. St Paul says, 'God dwells in light inaccessible.' And one saint declares, 'No man ever saw God.' St Paul tells us 'We shall know God as we are known.' As God knows himself so we shall know him; as he sees all things in himself so we shall see all things in him. 'We shall know as we are known,' St Paul says. The little being cleared away, I shall see as I am seen, as he sees himself, without little, with nothing between; all in himself and in him all things, nothing outside him; and we too shall know without little and without means. We shall know in his Son. The Son is the image of the Godhead, not the Godhead itself: he is the idea of God the Father. The Father's reflection is his only Son. In that idea where nothing exists, in that image we shall be reflected in the Son and by the Son reflected back into the Father: in that image, all the same, where there is no this nor that, we shall know

God with God's only Son. May the little depart from us and allow us to know thee the one true God. So help us God. Amen.

XLII

THE IMAGE AND ITS OBJECT

Modicum et jam non videbitis (*Joh.* $16_{17, 19}$). My Latin quotation is from the Gospel of St John which we read on Sunday. It is what our Lord said to his disciples, 'A modicum, a little, and ye see me not.' Anything, however small, adhering to the soul prevents your seeing me. St Augustine being asked the meaning of eternal life answered and said: Dost thou ask me what is eternal life? Ask eternal life, see what it says itself. None knows what heat is like the hot, nor wisdom like the wise, none knows the meaning of eternal life so well as the eternal life itself. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, 'This is eternal life, to know thee God, the one true God.'

'A modicum, a little, and lo! ye see me not.' Now you must understand that if the soul saw God even from afar, or in some intervening thing, as in a cloud, an instant, she would not turn away from him, not for all the world. What think ye then would happen if she saw God in himself, as he is, face to face in his naked essence? All creatures God has ever made or could make if he would amount to very little, a mere nothing as compared with God himself. The heavens are big, so vast indeed, were I to tell ye would not credit me. If you could take a needle and prick the heavens with it, that needle-point of heaven, as compared with the whole heavens plus this entire world, would be greater than this universe compared with God. Well and truly then it may be said, 'a trifle, a little, and ye shall not see me.' Whilst thou seest aught of creature thou seest naught of God; however little, it must go. Says the soul in the Book of Love, 'I ran about and sought him whom my soul loveth and I found him not.' She met with angels and many things besides, but she found not him whom her soul loved. Then she goes on to say, 'It was but a little I passed from them and I found him whom my soul loveth,' just as though to say: when I had gotten beyond creatures (little things and of small account) I came on him whom my soul loveth. The soul must pass beyond, she must transcend, all creatures before she can find God.

Now you must know, God loves the soul so mightily, he who should rob God of loving the soul would rob him of his very life and being: would kill God, if one may so say; for the very love wherewith God loves the soul is what his Holy Breath is blowing in.

But if God loves the soul so much the soul must be a most important thing.

The philosopher says in his book *On the Soul*: If there were no means the eye could see a gnat, an ant, in heaven. And he was right, referring to the air and fire, etc. that intervene between the eye and heaven. Another philosopher declares that without means no eye could see at all. Both are expressing the same truth.

The first one says that if there were no means the eye could see an ant in heaven. And that is true. If nothing intervened between God and the soul she would see God every whit, for God himself is wholly free from means and brooks no sort of intervention. If the soul were stripped of all her sheaths, God would be discovered all naked to her view and would give himself to her, withholding nothing. As long as the soul has not thrown off all her veils, however thin, she is unable to see God. Any medium, but a hair's-breadth, in betwixt the body and the soul stops actual union. That is true of corporal things and how much more of ghostly. Boëthius says, Wouldst know the naked truth? Then cast off joy and fear and trust and hope and pain. Joy is a means, fear is a means, faith and hope and pain, they all are means. While thou regardest them and they have regard to thee thou canst not see God.

The second doctor says: without means the eye would see nothing. If I cover my eyes with my hand I can see nothing of my hand. If I put it before me I see it quite distinctly. This is due to the dense nature of the hand which must be rarefied and rendered volatile in air and light and in effigy be carried to my eye. The same thing with a mirror. If thou hast it facing thee thy image is reflected in the glass. The eye, like the soul, is a mirror, and things presented to it all appear therein. I do not see the hand, the stone, itself: I see the image of the stone, but I do not see this image in a second image or by any other means: I see it without means and without image. This image is itself the means: image without image like motion without motion although causing motion and size which has no size though the principle of size. Even so the image is in this sense imageless that it is not seen in another image. The eternal Word is the means and the image itself which is without means and without image, so that the soul in the eternal Word conceives of God and knows him without image and with nothing between.

There is one power in the soul: intellect, of prime importance to the soul for making her aware of, for detecting, God. It has five properties. First, it is detached from here and now. Next, it is like nothing. Thirdly, it is pure and uncompounded.

Fourthly, it is in itself active or self-searching. Fifthly, it is an image.

First, it is detached from here and now. Here and now, that, in other words, is time and place. *Now* is the minimum of time; not a fragment of time nor a fraction of time: a smack, a connection, an end of time. Small though it be it must go; everything time touches has to go. Again, it is detached from *here*. And *here* means place. The spot I am standing on is small, but it must disappear before I can see God.

Secondly, it has no like. A philosopher says, God is a thing that nothing is like and that nothing can become like. But according to St John, 'we shall be called God's children' and if we are God's children we must resemble God. How then can this doctor say God is a thing that nothing is like? The answer is that in being like nothing this power is like God. God is like nothing and this power is like nothing. You must understand that all creatures are by nature endeavouring to be like God. The heavens would not revolve unless they followed on the track of God or of his likeness. If God were not in all things, nature would stop dead, not working and not wanting; for whether thou like it or no, whether thou know it or not, nature fundamentally is seeking, though obscurely, and tending towards God. No man in his extremity of thirst but would refuse the proffered draught in which there was no God. Nature's quarry is not meat or drink nor clothes nor comfort nor any things at all wherein is naught of God, but covertly she seeks and ever more hotly she pursues the trail of God therein.

Thirdly, it is pure and unmingled. By nature God can tolerate no mingling or admixture. Nor is there in this power any intermingling or admixture: it is free from impurity and nothing foreign can occur therein. To tell a comely person he is fair and dark would do him an injustice. The soul must be without admixture. If someone hangs something to my cloak or sticks something on it then anyone who wears the cloak will wear too its attachments. If I go out hence, there will then go with me the whole of my attachments. What the spirit rests on, is attached to, takes the spirit with it. The man who rests on nothing, is attached to nothing, though heaven and earth should fall, will remain unmoved.

Fourthly, it is ever seeking, travailing, within. God is such that he ever abides in the innermost. And intellect is ever seeking him. But will goes out to what it loves in him. So at the coming of my friend, suddenly my heart goes out to him and he is glad. St Paul declares, 'we shall know God as we are known.' And according to St John, 'we shall see God as he is.'

Now if I am coloured I must have something in me that will take the colour. I should never colour unless I had a colour nature. And I can only see God in what he sees himself in. St Paul declares that 'God dwells in light inaccessible.' It is not to be denied that keeping in the way, in the entry, though all well and good, is yet a long way from the truth, for it is not God.

Fifthly, it is an image. Mark this, it is important: it gives you the whole sermon in a nutshell. Object and image are bound up with one another so that we cannot part them. We can think of fire apart from heat and heat without the fire. We can think of the sun apart from light and of light as independent of the sun. But we cannot part the object from its image. I say more: Almighty God himself cannot disentangle them: they are born together and they die together. I do not die because my Father does. Suppose you die, then we no longer say, he is his son, we say, he was his son. Cloth that is bleached is like all whiteness in its whiteness. But if you blacken it, it is dead to whiteness. And here it is the same. If the image, God's likeness, disappeared, there would perish also its exemplar, God. One thing I would say: ye are become two, ye are become three. Now mark my words. Intellect peers in, it searches every corner of the Godhead and finding the Son in the heart of the Father, in his ground, it takes him and sets him in its own. Intellect presses in; she is not content with good or wisdom, nor with truth nor yet with God himself. She is no more content with God than with a tree, a stone. She never rests until she gets into the ground whence truth and good proceed and takes them *in principio*, in the beginning, the fount of truth and goodness, where they rise before their coming forth: a ground far higher than truth and goodness are. Her sister (will) contents herself with God as being good. But intellect, leaving this behind, goes in and breaks through to the root whence shoots the Son and whence the Holy Spirit blossoms forth. May we discover this and be for ever blest. So help us Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

XLIII[1]

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

Meister Eckhart said: Doctors debate which is the nobler, knowledge or love. Some say that love is better than knowledge. I say it is not. Our best authorities declare that knowledge is nobler than love. Love and will take God as being good. If God were not good, will would have none of him; if God were not

[1] Jostes, No. 10.

lovely, love would scout him. But understanding would not. Knowledge is not confined either to good or to love or to wisdom or lordship. By putting names to God the soul is only dressing him up and making a figure of God; nor is this the doing of knowledge. Though God were neither good nor wise, still understanding would seize him; it strips everything off, not stopping either at wisdom or good, nor majesty nor power. It pierces to naked being and grasps God bare, ere he is clothed in thought with wisdom and goodness. Where the Son has his beatitude, there in the Father, understanding finds hers.

Now I am going to say something never read nor preached before.

At the College yesterday they admitted that there is a ground within the soul corresponding to the Father-nature. Just as the Father is bringing forth his Son in the Holy Ghost and these three are one God, so this ground is bringing forth understanding and will, one power as God is one Word. Withal this ground is free from any taint of creature. All the things we attribute to the soul form a screen round this ground wherein God is looking at the soul and the soul is looking at God. According to St Paul, 'We beholding the vision of God's splendour are changed in that same image from glory to glory.' This image is too closely joined to God for creatures to dissever and God himself will not divide it. Alas! we reck so little of this image, we keep it not so bright as it was given us by God! Whatever we may do God is never satisfied unless we there abide in utter destitution and so enable God at all times without ceasing to bring his one-begotten Son to birth in this same ground. This birth befalls not once a year nor once a day nor once an hour, but all the time, above time, in the while which is neither here nor now. This is the ground I speak of. May we live in suchwise that God can energise in us, So help us God.

I have sometimes said that the soul is an imitation of God; now I say that she is his image, and in the very same form the Father has eternally formed, and the same that Christ is formed in.

According to Meister Eckhart, All creatures contain one reflection: one, that is the denial of its being the other; the highest of the angels denies he is the lowest. God is the denial of denials: the one which is exclusive of all otherness. To call a tree a tree is not to name it, for all the species are confused. If we name it in its first eruption, in its perfection, we do not call it a tree, we call it pure divine nature. Another notion of it, rather better. The divine nature is the great divider. Meister Eckhart says, The Pharisee besought our Lord to eat with him. What is the Pharisee? He stands for detachment; a

Pharisee is one who is detached from all and united into one. The prophet cries, 'Lord have mercy on the work which is in thee.' The highest work God ever wrought was done in mercy. Understanding goes in deep enough to lay hold of being simply as being-in-itself, but where being is losing itself, drowned in itself, there understanding falls away.

Friar John says: It is a question among the theologians whether it lies with the soul, or with God, for her to be God. I say the power lies in the soul. Suppose the soul ready to be God, then God must work in that power and draw the power into himself: the energy then is in God and the capacity is in the soul. Were I wholly that I am I should be God; there would be for me neither time nor place nor change. There is nothing so easy to me, so possible, as to be God. To stay quiet requires no work, whereas if I change to another I must reduce myself to naught: but I remain as I am.

I say, no creature is so vile but it can boast of being; in proportion to its being is its power of being God, for whatever is being is God.

Bishop Albertus says, Man is divine above all as receiving unhindered the inflowing Deity. In the words of the saint, The light of my soul is never extinguished and my desire is ever in the beholding of God.

XLIV[1]

IN ALL THINGS I SEEK REST

In omnibus requiem quæsivi (*Eccl.* 24_{11}). In all things I seek rest.

. . . . . .

The masters tell us that God made the powers of the soul by nature receptive to their likes, thus the ear is always hearing and the eye is always seeing. What my eye sees is one with it, just like the air with light. The nature of the eye is to see colour, otherwise it would not be an eye. And conversely with colour, by nature it affects the eye or it would not be colour. To think of it as colour yet incommunicable to the eye would be to deny that it is colour. I can see the minster. But no one sees it in me. For a thing to be visible in me, it must be so placed that its reflection can be seen in me. Standing in front of me and face to face a man could see his image in my eye. Stand over flowing water and you cannot see yourself. But supposing it is clear, then where it is collected and still enough for a reflection you can see your form in it. They say glass is transparent, like a crystal. But cover it with lead or wax and it reflects: it gives an image of whatever stands before it, perfect in every detail.

[1] See also Wackernagel, No. lxiii.

God made the soul, her highest power, her best, in order to beget himself therein. There, says a philosopher, begetter and begotten are the same and there is neither time nor place nor matter. Matter means gross bodily things; it is intractable and hinders. Hence it has been said that if the Father could he would make himself. But he cannot, so he makes his like.

. . . . . .

Our Lord said, 'I dwell in Jacob and I rest in Israel.' Jacob stands for riddance. God is gotten nowhere excepting in the soul that has put all creatures under her feet. St Augustine says, God is being born within the soul the whole time without ceasing, but not born to us to whom he is not manifest but hidden. As long as God is hidden in the soul by aught, he is not born to us, and you may be quite sure that God is never born to any soul excepting she has put all creatures under her feet: where there is no other there God begets himself, not his likeness, his own self: God and God. Well and truly then the Son may say, 'I dwell in Jacob and in Israel I rest. And said he: 'My Father sent me and he engendered in me that which is my nature: that I am being born all the time within the soul who is pure enough for him to see himself in.' There God is at rest and the soul reposes in God. To deprive God of resting in the soul would be to deprive him of his deity. To rob him of it even in one's thoughts is to rob him of his Godhood, since he is pleased to rest in all things. David says: 'My Lord said to my heart: thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee in the reflection of the Holy Ghost,' and again he said: 'I have begotten thee in my innermost heart, in the depths of my soul; I have spread my roots, I have established myself in the city of Zion and my power in Jerusalem.' The soul in Zion, who has transcended things and is dwelling in her central depth, in her does God give birth to his inmost self. The heavenly Father said to his only Son: As I begat thee in my inmost heart, even so I charge thee by thy divine nature that thou comest not to birth save in the innermost recesses of the soul.—Whosoever would deny to God that he should beget himself in this way in the soul would deny him his God-nature. May God thus beget himself in us, So help us God. Amen.

XLV

IN ALL THINGS I SEEK REST

In omnibus requiem quæsivi (*Eccl.* 24_{11}). We find this in the Book of Wisdom. We may imagine Wisdom in friendly

conversation with the soul, saying, 'In all things I sought rest.' To which the soul replies, 'He who created me rested in my tent.' And Wisdom says again, 'My rest is in the holy city.' If I were asked to say to what end the creator has created creatures, I should answer: rest. And were I asked a second time, what are all creatures seeking so eagerly by nature? I should answer: rest. And if a third time I were asked what the soul seeks in all her agitations, once more I should say: rest.

Look how the face of divine nature turns foolish and demented all the powers of the soul with longing for it, so as to draw them to itself. God likes this so well, it pleases him so much that his entire God-nature is turned into this bent. He says, 'In the holy place likewise I repose.' As the soul rests in God so God reposes in her. If she rests partly in God he rests partly in her. If she rests wholly in him he rests altogether in her. In those limpid souls where God can see the reflection of himself, God is reposing in the soul and the soul is reposing in God. To deprive God of this, though but in thought, is to deprive him, to deny to him, his Godhood who is seeking rest in all things, for God's nature is rest.

Fourthly, whether they know it or not, creatures are all in search of rest. No one can shut or open his eyes without seeking rest: he is ridding himself of some hindrance or finding somewhere to rest. These are the two motives of all human action. As I often say, my love is placed where I most clearly see God's likeness. But rest is more like God than any creature.

Mark how the soul must be for God to rest in her. She must be pure. What makes the soul pure? Keeping to spiritual things. She is exalted too by these. The more she is exalted the purer she becomes in her intention and the more efficient in her work. As the philosopher says about the stars: they become less potent as they near the earth, being out of their true course. In their proper orbit, though they are invisible on earth, they have more pull upon it. St Anselm apostrophises the soul, 'Withdraw thyself a little from the tumult of external things.' And again, 'Flee away and hide thee from the rush of inner thoughts which cause such great disquiet to the soul.'

We can ask of God no better thing than rest. All God wants of man is a peaceful heart; then he performs within the soul an act too Godlike for creature to attain to or yet see. The divine Wisdom is discreetly fond and lets no creature watch. As our Lord says, 'I will lead my bride into the desert and will speak to her in her heart,' into a solitude, that is, away from creatures.

Fourthly, he says the soul must rest in God. God cannot do divine work in the soul, for in the soul things are all ruled by

measure. Measure means limit, within and without. There is none of this in God's operations, which are infinite: openly enclosed in God's revelation. David says, 'God sits above the Cherubim. He does not say, above the Seraphim. *Cherubim* means wisdom, knowledge which brings God to the soul and leads the soul to God. But not into God. Not in her own intelligence does God perform his godly operation, because in her this is ruled by measure; but he uses it as being God, divine. The highest power steps forth (that is, the will) and breaking into God, leads in the soul with her intelligence and all her powers and makes her one with God. Here God is acting above the power of the soul: not as in the soul but as in God. The soul now dowsed in God and in divine nature, receives divine life; now she is subject to the law of God and is of the order of God. To take an illustration from natural philosophy. At the moment of conception the child in its mother's womb has neither limbs nor colour. But when the soul is poured into the body it takes form and colour and becomes an entity (in virtue of the soul), with the created nature of the soul and the appearance of a living being. And the soul, when perfectly atoned with God and dowsed in his divinity, loses all her hindrances, her feebleness and instability, and suddenly renewed with divine life grows orderly in all her ways and virtues. Look at a light, the nearer the wick the duller and denser the glow; as the flame shoots up from the wick it gets brighter and brighter. The more exalted the soul the better God can do in her his divine work in his own likeness. Like a mountain rising up two leagues above the earth, graven with magic runes and sacred characters which defy the winds and rain. Even so the really holy soul is uplifted into perfect calm, absolute and changeless in divine activity. That religious has good cause for shame who is moved so readily to gloom or anger or desire. He is no true religious.

Lastly, creatures are all seeking rest whether they know it or not. Never is the stone bereft of motion while it is not lying on the ground. And similarly fire. All creatures also: they seek their natural place. The loving soul finds rest nowhere except in God. David says, 'God has ordained to everything its place: to fish the water, birds the air and beasts the earth and to the soul the Godhead.' And Job declares in the same strain, 'What is in God he gives us for our joy and bliss.' God grant us peace and rest in him, So help us the eternal truth, which is himself. Amen.

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XLVI[1]

POVERTY

The really virtuous man does not want God. What I have I want not. He makes no plans, he sets no store by things. As God is higher than man so is he readier to give than man is to receive. Not by his fasts and vigils and his many outward works does a man prove his progress in the virtuous life, but it is a sure sign of his growth if he finds eternal things more and more attractive than the things that pass. The man who has a thousand marks of gold and gives it all away for love of God is doing a fine thing; yet I say, it were far finer and far better for him to despise it, setting it at naught on God's account.

A man should orient his will and all his works to God and having only God in view go forward unafraid, not thinking, am I right or am I wrong? One who worked out all the chances ere starting his first fight would never fight at all. And if, going to some place, we must think how to set the front foot down we shall never get there. It is our duty to do the next thing: go straight on, that is the right way.

There are five kinds of poverty. The first is devilish poverty; the second, golden poverty; the third is willing poverty; the fourth is spiritual poverty; the fifth, divine poverty.

The first, or devilish poverty, applies to all who have not what they fain would have, outward or inward. That is their hell.

The second, golden poverty, is theirs who in the midst of goods and properties pass empty out and in. If everything they own was burnt the effect on them would be to leave them quite unmoved. Heaven must needs be theirs and they would have no less.

The third is willing poverty and belongs to those who, renouncing goods and honours, body and soul, leave everything with right good grace. These give judgment with the twelve apostles and by pronouncing judgment it is their judgment day who, knowing what they leave, yet set another in their heart and mightily bestir themselves about their own departure. Such are the willing poor.

The fourth are spiritual poor. These have forsaken friends and kindred, not merely goods and honour, body and soul; further, they are quit of all good works: the eternal Word does all their work while they are idle and exempt from all activity. And since in the eternal Word is neither bad nor good, therefore they are absolutely empty.

The fifth are godly poor, for God can find no place in them to

[1] Jostes, No. 34.

work in. Theirs is riddance without and within for they are bare and free from all contingent form. This is the man : in this man all men are one man and that man is Christ. Of him one master says, ' Earth was never worthy of this man who looks on heaven and earth the same.' This man is object-free in time and in eternity.

Now enough of those who have no object in eternity, but one thing more of those who are objectless in time. What is meant by object ? There are two objects : one is otherness (not I) ; the other is a man's own proper self (his I).

The first otherness is *becoming*, all that has come into existence ; such things breed otherness and pass away. This applies to the passage of time.

He who knows one matter in all things remains unmoved. For matter is the subject of form and there can be no matter without form nor form devoid of matter. Form without matter is nothing at all ; but matter ever cleaves to form and is one undivided whole in every single part of it. Now since form in itself is naught, therefore it moves nothing. And since matter is perfectly impartible, therefore it is unmoved. This man then is unmoved by form or matter and is therefore objectless in time.

Man's other object is to possess his proper self, to identify himself with all perfection, with that most precious treasure his own aught : that is his quest. Now when a thing has gotten its own form, no more nor less, that thing is all its own and no one else's. He who conceives this really is perfect in the sense that he is wholly objectless to eternity, etc.

XLVII

THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL

Hæc est vita æterna ut cognoscant te solum deum verum etc. (*Joh.* 17_3). Here beginneth a discourse on a gospel saying, Christ's dictum, ' This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God and thy Son whom thou hast sent.'

Now no one knows the Father except his only Son, for he says himself, ' No man knows the Father save the Son and no man knows the Son save the Father.' Ergo, if man is to know God, and therein consists his eternal bliss, he must be, with Christ, the only Son of the Father. If ye would be blest ye must be the only Son ; not many sons : one Son. True, ye are many in your carnal birth, but ye shall be one in the eternal birth, for in God there is no more than the one natural spring with its single natural outlet of the Son ; not twain but one. And hence if ye are one with Christ ye are the sole issue with the eternal Word.

How does man come to be the only Son of the eternal Father? I answer. The eternal Word did not take upon itself this man or that, it took upon itself one indivisible free nature, human nature, bare and formless, for the impartible form of manhood is wholly without form; and since in this union the eternal Word took human nature formless, therefore the Father's image, his eternal Son, became the form of human nature. Here it is just as true to say that man became God as that God became man. For human nature was transformed by taking the divine form which is the image of the Father. It follows that to be the Son ye must depart from and discard whatever makes for division in you. Man is an accident of nature. Do away with accidents and take yourselves in the freedom of your impartible humanity. But this very nature wherein ye take yourselves is become the Son of the eternal Father by union with the eternal Word, and therefore ye with Christ become the Son of the eternal Father by reason of enjoying the same nature which was there made God. Beware lest ye take yourselves as either this or that: realize yourselves in the liberation of your undivided manhood. If ye would be one ye must be rid of *not*, for *not's* pride is division. How so? Well, suppose I say, Thou art not the man. This *not* puts a division between thee and this man. To be undivided ye must be free from *not*. There is one power in the soul which is immune from *not*, which has not aught in common with any mortal thing: there is nothing in this power; only God is seen there face to face.

A man being thus the Son, his motion, his energy, whatever he enjoys, he has gotten of his own. Now the Son of the Father is the eternal Son as being descended from the Father. Further, all he has he has within himself since he is one in essence and in nature with the Father: his essence and his quiddity, he has both in himself and in this sense he prays, 'Father, as I and thou are one even so I would they should be the same.' And just as the Son is one with the Father in his essence, so thou being one with him in essence and in nature, hast got it all in thee as the Father has in him. Thou hast it not on loan from God, because God is thine own: all thou hast gotten thou hast gotten of thine own and such works as are not produce of thine own are dead works in the sight of God. These thou art moved to by extraneous things and they are not living: they are dead, for anything alive is endowed with a motion of its own. If man's works are to live they must be indigenous: not foreign things nor outside but within him.

Remember. If ye love right as God ye love not right as right, therefore ye neither take it nor love it as a whole but as divided.

But God is right, so ye are not taking him nor loving him in his entirety. Take right as right and ye take it as God. Then where right is at work ye will be working too, seeing that ye do right all the time. Though hell stood in the way of right ye would still do right and that not as a hardship but a pleasure, because being right itself ye must do right. The more a thing participates in a common nature, the more it is one with the impartibility of the common nature, the more impartible it is itself. To the whole truth, God help us. Amen.

XLVIII

BEHOLD, I SEND MY ANGEL

Ecce ego mitto angelum meum etc. (*Matt.* 11_{10}, *Luc.* 7_{27}). 'Behold, I send my angel before my face to prepare my way before me. And he whom we seek shall suddenly come into his temple. Who knoweth the day of his coming? For he is as a fire that blazes up.' Suddenly, he says, he shall come into his temple. The soul shall come with all of her possessions, be they sins or be they virtues, and offer them all up at once, lifting them up in the Son into the Father. As the love of the Father is the loveliness of the Son. The Father loves nothing at all but the Son and such things as he finds in the Son. Let the soul then rise up in her whole power and offer herself to the Father in his Son so that she with the Son may be loved by the Father.

He says, 'Behold, I send my angel.' The word *behold* suggests three things. Something great or marvellous or rare. Behold, I send my angel to refine the soul and prepare her for divine light. Divine light is always in the angelic light and of the angelic light. The soul would be troubled and distressed if God's light were not shaded therein. God, clouded by angelic light is always waiting to come out and shine upon the soul. I am wont to say, when I am asked what God is doing, that he is begetting his Son, bearing him ever fresh and new and with such delight that he does nothing else besides this work with his Holy Ghost and all things in it. Hence his words, 'Behold I.' He who says *I* does the very best work. None but the Father can say this word right. The act is peculiar to him and there is no issue thereof but his Son. In this act God tells forth his all. When God does this work in the soul, that is his birth: his birth is his work and his work is his Son. God performs this operation in the innermost depths of the soul so secretly that neither saint nor angel knows, nor is the soul herself a party to it save that she is the patient; God does it by himself. It is really the Father who says, 'I send my angel.'

Now I maintain we cannot be content with this and will have none of him. It was Origen who said, 'Mary Magdalene sought our Lord; she sought for one dead man and was disappointed to find two living angels.' She was right, for she expected God. Dionysius says of the august principalities of angels, that divine order reigns there and divine activity and divine likeness or divine truth, as far as that is possible. What is divine order but divine power and from them both springs love which is ardour and wisdom and truth and power. For love is burning in the realm of essence: transcendental, actual being, free from nature. It is its nature to be natureless. To think of goodness or wisdom or power dissembles the essence and dims it in thought. The mere thought obscures essence. Such is divine rule. And where God finds its like within the soul there does the Father give his Son birth. The soul's whole power bursts alight. Out of this power, out of this light, leaps the flame: love. The soul with all her might ascends to the order of God.

Now to speak of the order of the soul. According to a heathen doctor, the supernal light of the soul is very bright and clear and dearly loves itself, whereas the soul dislikes herself and never sheds this natural light upon herself unless her lower powers are ordered to her highest; her natural light being high enough to reach angelic nature, but all averse from her inferior powers, it will not pour therein nor will it drench the soul unless these lower powers will give way. When a lord rules over a people the serf is under the knight and the knight is under the baron. They all desire peace and to that end they will all help each other. And even so each several power is subject to the others and helps to keep peace in the soul, perfect rest. Our doctors define perfect rest as absolute freedom from motion. In it the soul can rise above herself to the order of the gods. In this absolute rest the Father gives the soul his only Son. Now he ranks first in order of divinity.

The other members take somewhat lower rank as I was saying of the angels who have God's likeness very strong in them and illumination. In this interior light they soar above themselves into the divine image, all face to face with God in his divine light and so much the same that they do God's work. Angels illumined like this and who are so like God, absorb and suck in God. I often say that were I void and had this fiery inner love and likeness I should absorb God altogether. Light streams out and lights up what it falls on. To call a man enlightened as we sometimes do, means little. Where it comes in it is far better; where it breaks through into the soul and makes her Godlike, divine, as far as may be, and light inwardly. In this interior light she

towers above herself in the light of God. Now she has come home and is at one with him and is his fellow-worker. Nothing is wrought by creature, the Father works alone. The soul shall never stop until she works as well as God. Then she and the Father shall do his work together: she shall work as one with him, wisely and lovingly. That we may be in unity with him, God help us. Amen.

XLIX

BEHOLD, I SEND MY ANGEL

Ecce mitto angelum meum (*Malach.* 3_1, *Luc.* 7_{27}). It is written in the gospel, 'Behold, I send my angel.' Angels are within our ken for the evangelists declare, 'we shall be like the angels.' One authority says, an angel is an image of God. Another one says he is fashioned like God. A third one describes him as a clear mirror wherein is reflected the goodness of God, the absolute stillness and mystery of God, as far as that is possible. Angels, again, have been defined to be pure intellectual light free from material things. We shall be like the angels. Perception here means seeing in the light that is in time, for anything I think of I think of in the light that is in time and temporal. But angels perceive in the light that is beyond time and eternal. They know in the eternal now. Men know in the now of time. The now of time is infinitely short. Yet take away this now of time and thou art everywhere and hast the whole of time. This thing or that thing is not all things; as long as I am this or that, have this or that, I am not all things nor I have not all things. Purify till thou nor art nor hast not either this or that, then thou art omnipresent, and being neither this nor that thou art all things. An angel is and acts as an intelligence in his degree, beholding God without ceasing and his object is intelligible essence. Hence he is far removed from things. Remote from time and temporalities.

Mark the prophet's words, he says, 'I send my angel.' The evangelist, however, omits the pronoun I. This points, in the first place, to God's elemental nature: to the fact that God is unnameable, transcending speech in the abstraction of his essence where, without word or utterance, God is ineffable to creatures. It shows next, that the soul is ineffable and wordless; in her proper cause she is inarticulate, nameless and mute. The *I* is suppressed because there she has neither word nor utterance. Thirdly, it suggests that God and the soul are so entirely one that God has not a single thing to tell him from the soul, nor is he any

other than the soul. The *I* is silent because he and the soul are every whit the same ; he has no property apart from soul nor does any other nature come within his ken. In the other reference, the text says *I* to indicate God's is-ness : that God simply is. All things are in God ; out of him, without him, is naught. All creatures are infernal and of no account compared with God. What they are in truth that they are in God, for it is God alone who is the truth ; the word *I* stands for the actuality of divine truth for it is the glyph of one-existence. It proclaims that God alone is. Secondly, it means that God is inseparate from things ; that he is more innate in them than they are in themselves. And man should be inseparate from things : not as cleaving to self but as wholly detached from himself ; thus he is inseparate from all things, and he is all things. So far as thou art nothing to thyself so far thou art all things and inseparate from all things ; and so far as thou art not divorced from all things so far thou art God and all things, for God's deity consists in his being present in all things. Wherefore the man who is inseparate from all things enjoys divinity as God himself enjoys it. Thirdly, the word *I* is in a sense the end of name for it is no proper name : it signifies the perfection of name and means immutability, dispassion : that God is immoveable, intangible, eternal stability.

Fourthly, it points to the absolute purity of the divine being which is entirely without admixture. Goodness, wisdom and anything else that we can attribute to God are impurities with God's abstract essence ; coexistence is foreign to essence, but the word *I* denotes God's pure essence, his being in itself without anything alien and strange. The angels are the image, the mirror of God, which contains the reflection of the Godhead, of the glory, the stillness and the mystery of God. Let us like the angels imitate God. According to philosophers, to make a portrait of a man one must not copy Conrad nor yet Henry. For if it be like Conrad or like Henry it will not recall the man, but will remind one of Conrad or of Henry. Moreover, Conrad's portrait will not be like Henry for, given the knowledge and the art, one could do Conrad to the life, the very image of him. Now, God both will and can : he made thee like unto himself, the very image of himself. But *like* him argues something foreign and aloof. Now there is nothing foreign nor aloof betwixt God and the soul, therefore the soul is not like God : she is identical with him, the very same as he is.

More I do not know and cannot tell, so here my argument must end. But I was thinking on the way, that we ought to be utterly detached in our intention, having no one, nothing, in view but the Godhead as such : not happiness nor this nor that,

just God and Godhead in itself. Aught beside that thou intendest is a divine impurity. Seize the actual Godhead itself. God help us so to do. Amen.

L

I CAME FORTH FROM THE FATHER

Exivi a patre et veni in mundum (*Joh.* 16_{28}). I quote from the Gospel of St John. Our Lord says, 'I came forth from the Father and am come into the world and again I leave the world and return to my Father.' Another of his sayings is, 'Amen, Verily I say unto you whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name the same shall be yours.' Scholars say the word *amen* is an expression for stability. Our Lord says, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away before my word shall pass away,' which never changes. The heavens which are manifold and the unnumbered stars are all self-coloured. The moon alone is pied, thick and clear, dark and light. That is due to the neighbourhood of earth. And our doctors teach that in God there is no yesterday nor morrow, it is to-day and now all the time in God. Augustine observes that the architect who builds a house therein displays his art; though it may fall to ruin the art within his soul neither ages nor decays. And again Augustine says, All things are immutable in the eternal Word, nor do they wear away albeit in themselves they are corruptible, apt to be in some sort or not to be at all.

He says, 'Verily' (*i.e.* without fail or invariably), 'whatsoever ye ask of my Father in my name the same shall be yours,' According to St Augustine, 'To pray to God for aught save God is not to pray at all.' John Damascene declares that 'seeing herself the soul sees spirit; seeing an angel she sees spirit, yet, beholding God, she and the angel are but corporal things compared with him.' Their mind is as matter to God. Angelic light is darkness as compared with him. Our Lord says, 'Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask in my name the same shall be yours,' meaning, what is in man's name is man; what is in light's name is light; what is in God's name is fixed and immutable. The name of God belongs to none but him who stands in this light. No man can say Father except he be Son and none is called Son unless he be one with the one-begotten Word. Whoso asks in God's name may demand of the Father whatever he will. Words have enormous power and have gotten it from the emanation of the eternal Word.

Our Lord says, 'I am come into the world.' The Father comes into his Son with all he is, he comes into his Son with all he has,

he comes into his Son with all that he affords and, fourthly, he comes in an intellectual act. It is proper to the Son to dwell in the Father and it is proper to the Father to dwell in his Son and in the Holy Ghost. The full promise of the Father is brought forth in the Son to the end that the Son may transmit it to the soul. To use a favourite simile of mine. When a stone is thrown into a pond the impact starts a circle, small but energetic, which sets up other circles, the second being larger than the first albeit not so potent and the third one bigger still; one is gotten from another without stopping; and if the throw was hard enough the water's edge is reached before the ripples are exhausted. One unique throw with the world a sheet of water and the water would fail ere the circles died away.

Now mark the application. First, out of the Father there leaps forth the Son, small, but so puissant in his godly strength that it is he who causes the whole emanation. The second sally is the premier angel, following hard upon the first event. It speeds apace, and though less energetic than the first and fully small, it is endowed with so much force that its superfluous energy supplies the lower angels while its successors, yet more widely flung, are bigger in circumference than the second or the first. They keep on brimming out the one behind the other, all busy pouring themselves forth from the highest to the lowest of the angels; but however far it be from the initial sally of the eternal Word to the first angel, this latter is too high to be affected by any corporal thing. Further. Our master claims for the lowest of the angels that in view of his energy projecting into God, the very basest of the inferior angels has so much of God's might that the smallest fraction (a chip as it were from the carpenter's axe), the minutest trace, of his activity makes all things grow and flourish. If this chip does not fall from his work, everything instantly perishes. They spread far and wide, reproducing so far as they may the first welling out of the Son from the Father; but this first emanation was so charged with power that given a thousand or more worlds they would be wanting in capacity ere the first issue had been spent, just as the water's edge was reached before the ripples were exhausted that arose from the impact of the stone.

Our Lord says, 'I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.' *World* meaning pure or virgin. He is referring to the soul. Boëthius says the world of the soul is called pure because she is fashioned like the fair and virgin world in God. And God is that soul which has gotten her into the perfect image of the divine world and wholly there abides, not peering forth but, all aloof from the outside world, standing still in the light-world

in God. Into this soul comes the Son, begotten there in all the panoply of God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all together in one perfect being. The soul that has gotten in her the Son, has in one perfect entity the entire promise of the Godhead. One thing more. Creatures communicate themselves so far as they are good. It is peculiar to God as being wholly good that into whomsoever does partake of him he empties himself wholly in his Son. Which is another argument for the soul who has gotten the Son receiving the Godhead altogether. Thirdly, the Father is performing, in his Son, an intellectual operation. According to the philosophers, man's highest happiness consists in the mental exercise of wisdom. And the Father's whole delight, his perfect bliss, is this intellectual wont which is the birth of his Son. This birth he so enjoys that he puts his whole might into it and his entire nature. Accordingly the soul having gotten the Son by a feat of understanding, in him possesses all that God can give, in one perfect joy and bliss.

Our Lord says, 'I came forth from the Father and am come into this world,' into the light-world, that is. The soul, true reflection of the divine world, into her enters the Son; just as he falls from the Father he is born in the soul. In this very same birth he is born in the world, in the soul, and bearing her up brings her to birth in the Father. As he says, 'again I leave the world,' the outer world, 'and re-ascend to my Father,' with the light-world of the soul, copy of the world divine, made on the same last, in the same likeness. He carries her up to his Father, into the first, into the ground whence the Son comes out and strikes down from the Father.

There is another meaning in his words, 'I came forth from the Father,' which is this: the Father goes into his Son in all his deity, for he is wholly intellectual. He goes clean into his Son. Had he more sons they would get naught; he could never have but one Son for he is none other than his understanding. Had he a thousand sons they must needs be all the same Son.

Our Lord says, 'I came forth from the Father and am come into the world. Again I leave the world and return to my Father.' He implies that his going out is his going into the soul. But her going in is her going out. The soul goes out of her outermost into her innermost, out of her own into the Son's. Her being caught up to the Father is his quitting the outer world and, with the soul, ascending once more to his Father. Mark tells of someone addressing our Lord as 'Good Master.' He replied, 'There is none good but God,' for in coming forth he falls clean into the soul with all he is. No creature exists that can give itself whole; it goes out in kindness and work but itself stays at home. His

exit is his entrance. His passage out of the Father is his passage into the soul. His emanation verily is God giving himself once for all in his Son. We say: the only-begotten Son who proceeds from the Father is the same as himself. From the moment the Father launches forth in all his might in the Son, he (the Father) reverts to pure essence. He has no other course seeing he has spent all his substance on his Son. Were there no time nor place nor matter, nothing left at all, the begetter would be as the begotten. It follows that the Son so called, must be the only Son and be one with the Father who utters in one single Word the whole of what he knows, the whole of what he can afford, in one single instant, and that instant is eternal.

Now our doctors say: natural acts make for unity. God vouchsafes himself, gives himself, as a whole to the soul in order that she may be one with him. Moreover, his first issue is his only Son. Again, our doctors teach that the highest of the angels is pure yet he forms a part of nature. But the only Son never entered any nature, he remained superior to nature: in pure being he went into the Father. The second eruption into nature, so our masters say, the highest spirit, remained by nature simplex, one in proportion to the nearness of his nature (to its origin). He broke in to let us out: his exit thence is his entrance here. Hence his words, 'Let. . . .'

LI

HE SOUGHT TO SEE . . . WHO HE WAS

Et quærebat videre Jesum, quis esset etc. (*Luc.* 19_3). St Luke relates that when our Lord walked upon earth in human nature 'there was a rich man who sought to see him, and could not for the press for he was small of stature.' According to a holy man, Only he is rich who has plenty of God and virtue. To be well off for goods and stinted for God makes one poor and not rich, for things are as nothing to God. Hence the protest of that seigneur whom his retainers lauded for his power and his riches. Quoth he, 'I trow they laud not me one whit who have forgot my strongest claim to praise, my power over my body to demand of it what I will.' This man who sought to see Jesus did outrun the crowd and climbed up into a tree in order to see him. And Jesus said, 'Make haste and come down, for to-day I abide at thine house.' Whoso would see Jesus must outrun all things. What does it show when a man does not hasten past things? It shows he has not tasted God. If he had tasted God he would hasten to pass by all things, and not pass by merely but break through all creatures. What his love is ready to leave he breaks

through. If we fail to see God that is due to our feeble desire no less than the concourse of creatures. Aim high, be high. To see God needs high aspiration. Know, ardent desire and abject humility work wonders. I vow God is omnipotent, but he is impotent to thwart the humble soul with towering aspiration. And where I cannot master God and bend him to my will it is because I fail either in will or meekness. I say, and I would stake my life upon it, that by will a man might pierce a wall of steel, and accordingly we read about St Peter that on catching sight of Jesus he walked upon the water in his eagerness to meet him.

Look you: a thing that grows in the filling will never get full. Take a vessel, a stoup; if you pour a stoup in and it stretches thereby then it will not be full. And so with the soul: the more she demands the more she is given; the more she receives the bigger she grows. Who is Jesus? He has no name. Where do we see God? Where there is no yesterday nor morrow: where it is now and to-day, there we see God. What is God? One master says, If I were forced to tell of God then I should say, God is a thing no mind can reach or grasp and that is all I know about him. Another master says, He who knows of God that he is unknown, that man knows God. Then comes St Augustine with his dictum, God is something sovran, supreme, which is common to all partakers. He means that God is somewhat wherein every creature must be; for if he fall out of the hand of the mercy of God he will fall back into the hand of the justice of God. He must ever be in him. Needs must a man have his being in God and have enjoyment in God withal, aye in God himself, an he will. But he who does not find eternal satisfaction and enjoyment in God himself must get it out of things, things that are base, far lower than his footstool; yet creatures without exception get their being from God, even the damned in hell persist on somewhat of his being. Though they dwell not in God in felicity, still they must go on without him, against their will, in damnation. What folly it is to refuse to be with him we cannot be without!

St Augustine says, 'What is God? He is something we cannot conceive any better.' But I say, God is better than anything we can conceive; I say, God is somewhat, I know not what, verily I know not. He is all that is being rather than not-being, existent more than non-existent; our highest aspirations are but grovelling things falling hopelessly short of God. He transcends heart's desire. When I preached at Paris I declared, and I durst now repeat, that not a man at Paris can conceive with all his learning what God is in the very meanest creature, not even in a fly. Moreover, I now say that the whole world is powerless to conceive it

What God is in himself no man can tell except he be ravished into the light that God is himself. What God is in the angels is very remote and nobody knows. What God is in the God-loving soul not a soul knows but the soul he is in. What God is in these nether things, I know to some extent but very little. What time God comes within our ken the natural faculties vanish. May we be rapt away into the light that is God himself and therein be forever blest. So help us God. Amen.

LII

THE GOOD HOUSEWIFE

Consideravit domum etc. 'The good housewife looks well to the ways of her house, not eating the bread of idleness.' This house represents the soul as a whole, and the ways of the house are the powers of the soul. An ancient philosopher says the soul is made in between one and two. The one is eternity, ever alone and without variation. The two is time, changing and given to multiplication. He means to convey that the soul in her higher powers touches eternity, God to wit, while her lower powers being in contact with time make her subject to change and biased towards bodily things, which degrade her. Could the soul know God as well as the angels do she would never have come into body. If she could know God without the world the world would not have been made for her sake. The world was contrived on her account for training and bracing the eye of the soul to endure divine light. The sunshine falling on the earth is dimmed first in the air and diffused on various things, for no human eye can support the sun. And even so the light of God is over strong and bright for the soul's eye to bear, without being fixed and given up by matter and reflection which accustom it to dwelling in the light divine.

In her superior powers the soul is in contact with God; so she takes after God. God takes after himself; he has gotten his form from himself and from no one beside. His form is that of perfect self-knowledge, absolute light. When the soul comes in contact with him in real understanding, then she is like him in form. Suppose you press a seal into green wax or red, or into cloth, just enough for the seal, the seal being stamped right into the wax so that none of the wax is left over unsealed, then it is one and the same with the seal. In just the same way the soul is wholly united with God in image and form when she is in contact with him in actual gnosis. St Augustine says the soul is of more noble build than any other creature, and that is why no mortal thing, destined to perish at the latter day, can hold communication with

or eke affect the soul save from a distance and by messengers. Such are the eyes and ears and the five senses: these are the soul's ways out into the world, and by these ways the world gets back into the soul. According to one master, the powers of the soul flow back into the soul laden with fruits; they never go out but they bring something back. So beware lest thine eyes bring back aught to hurt thy soul. My firm conviction is that everything a good man sees must better him. On seeing evil he thanks God for saving him therefrom and prays God to convert him to what he is. On seeing good his great desire will be to have it perfected in him.

This seeing serves two purposes: it scotches what is mischievous and makes us forthwith remedy our faults. Many a time I have laid it down that great workers, great fasters, great vigil-keepers, if they fail to mend their wicked ways, wherein true progress lies, do cheat themselves and are the devil's laughing-stock. A man once had an arrow he grew rich on. He was neighbour to a sower. When the arrow was in use a breeze from any quarter would catch it by the head and turn its tail into the wind. So this man approached the sower and quoth he, 'What will you give me to tell you the way of the wind?' Thus he sold his arrow and waxed rich thereby. And so might we become right rich in virtue by finding out our frailties, and then, in rue, setting ourselves to cure them.

This St Elizabeth did with much care. She looked well to the ways of her house. She had no fear for the winter for her household was doubly clad. Probable ills she provided against. Any lack she worked hard to supply. So she ate not the bread of idleness. Withal her superior powers she kept oriented to God. The superior powers of the soul are three. The first is intuition; the second irascibilis, *i.e.* the power of attack; the third is will. In the act of imbibing knowledge of the very truth into the impartible power whereby we apprehend God, the soul is a light. And God too is light, and when the divine light is flooding the soul, soul becomes merged into God just like a light into light. Then she is called the light of faith which is a divine virtue. And whither the soul is unable to go with her senses and powers thither faith takes her.

The second is the attacking force whose special function it is to progress. As the eye is for seeing colour and shape and the ear is for hearing sweet voices and sounds, so the soul with this power is ever advancing; if she glances aside to waver from him, that is sin. She cannot brook that aught should be above her. I trow she cannot brook God even being above her; unless he be within her and she has gotten as good as God himself, she

never rests. With this power God is apprehended by the soul, as far as that is feasible to creature and so it is called hope, which is a divine virtue also. Herein the soul has such a clear prospect of God that she fondly imagines God in his whole being has not a thing withholden from her. King Solomon says, 'Stolen waters are sweet.' And St Augustine tells us, 'The pears I stole were nicer than the ones my mother gave me, because they were forbidden and locked up.' So is that grace far sweeter to the soul which she has won by special work and wisdom than that which is our common property.

The third power is interior will, turned ever face-like towards God in godly will, drawing from God his love into itself. God is drawn by the soul and the soul is drawn by God, and this is divine love, another divine virtue. Divine felicity lies in three things. In knowledge and in liberation from the bondage of creature: in having enough of, having finished with, self and all creatures. Further, the soul's perfection lies in gnosis, in conception, in conceiving God and in union of perfect love. Do we want to know what sin means? Lapsing from felicity and virtue, that is the whole cause of sin. It behoves every soul to look to her ways. 'She had no fear for the winter with her household doubly clad,' as the scriptures tell of her. She was clothed with strength to withstand imperfection and was adorned with the truth. To all appearance this woman was rich and had the world at her feet, but in secret she knelt at the shrine of true poverty. And when her outward comforts failed she fled to him to whom all creatures flee, setting at naught the world and self. In this way she transcended self, despising men's despisery and not minding it, for all she had in mind was the tending of the sick and the cleansing of the foul, which she managed by dint of her pure heart. Even so let us look to the ways of our house and not eat the bread of idleness. So help us God. Amen.

LIII

WHOSOEVER WOULD COME AFTER ME

Dominus dicet: qui vult venire post me etc. (*Matt.* 16_{24}; *Luc.* 9_{23}). Our Lord says, 'Whosoever would come to me let him take up his cross and with willing martyrdom forsake himself and follow me.' Everything by nature is pursuing God after its own fashion. Fire draws upwards, earth falls downwards, and similarly every creature here is searching out the place God has ordained it for. Origen says a man forsakes himself when he by striving rids himself of customary sins and denies himself those things

he is addicted to ; so doing he takes up his cross with willing pain and disciplines himself in virtuous uses. Basilius, the saint, once said that any man who leaves the things that are behind him and beneath him and which are not God, has left himself. And treating of this subject in the book wherein he speaks about the soul, St Augustine calls her nobler, mightier, grander than any other creature and in these respects most like to God of all, barring the angels, who are nobler than her nature because they were the first to be poured forth and loosed from spirit although they keep a refuge in it. This the soul has not. She has to pour into the body.

Various people comment sagely upon this : If God is quite impartible why did he not create all things simply like the angels ? That would never do, theologians say. One sort of creature could not show forth God. He made many kinds of creatures for each one to show forth a modicum of God albeit no more of him that one drop of water reveals about the sea. Not but what a drop of water tells us more about the sea, and indeed the universe, than any creatures can reveal (of God). For out of drops we might get a sea, but not by means of any creatures could we succeed in getting God. St Gregory observes that, The soul whom God shines into so that she sees him somewhat, to her creatures are dwarfed or merely ciphers.

Thirdly, the text refers to one who dies a martyr's death as forsaking self. Our Lord says, ' Moses, to me no man comes as himself.' Now according to St Chrysostom, ' To be an other than I am I must abandon that I am.' This is accomplished by humility. ' Nothing ', says St Gregory, ' gives more power than does lowliness.' We see this well with Moses, who when he wanted to rest drove his flock of sheep into the valley. It was there he saw the bush burning but not consumed. ' I will go,' said Moses, ' and look at this great sight.' Then God called to him, ' Stay, Moses, go no further ! Doff thy shoes.' The feet are symbols of desire. They must be bare : drawn out of everything temporal and mortal ; then the soul can offer her whole self to her Lord. One of the saints has said that if the soul should rise and, being unillumined, offer herself to our Lord she would be rebuffed and come to grief ; like an eye that likes trying to look at the sun finds it grows weaker and blinder.

LIV

FROM HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND IN HIM

Ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia, ipsi gloria in sæcula (*Rom.* 11_{36}). St Paul says, ' From him and through him and in him are all things, to whom be glory and honour.' These words

are said of the three Persons and the unity of their nature. *From him* applies to the Father, the origin of all things in eternity and in time. *Through him* applies to the Son, through whom all things proceeded forth. *In him* applies to the Holy Ghost, in whom all things are contained, made spirit and brought back to their end. From another point of view these words, again, betoken the three Persons by their *from* and *through* and *in*. As these words are distinct even so do they show the distinction of the Persons. But from the word *him* (which is the same for all) we gather the oneness of their nature. He says, ' To him be glory and honour.' Proclaiming the three Persons as one God, to whom alone be all honour.

Now we proceed to speak of the things of God, of Persons and of essence, which we hardly understand. Those that cannot follow this discourse can take refuge in the dogma I have taught before, that the three Persons are in one essence and one essence in the three Persons. Remember we are speaking of Father and paternity, and you must understand that these two are not apart in two hypostases, but they are one hypostasis, and moreover they are one and three rationally speaking. Consider the meaning of paternity. It means the power of father-kind. A father is known by the fact that he begets, but we recognise paternity in a potential father. Take, for example, the maid who is a virgin. By nature she is maternal though not actually mother. The same thing with a father : in his power to beget he is paternal, but the fact of his begetting makes him father. Mark this difference between father and paternity when the Word is gotten ghostly in the soul. This we take to be the case when the soul, sublimed and in the proper state, grows pregnant with God's light and divine by nature : by the unique power of God grown big with Deity. You see, in this immanent power, soul too is paternal. But radiant with revelation, she with the Father begets and is then with the Father called father. This father and fatherhood differ as applied to the soul. Mark, too, that Son differs from filiation, remembering that these two are not separate in two hypostases : they are the same hypostasis. We find filiation in potential father-nature, unborn. If he were not unborn in his potential nature the Father could not beget him, for a thing that comes out must first have been in. So much for filiation. But the Son we explain as the Father's begetting of his own Word, whereby the Father is Father. The Son, moreover, is God in himself, not God of himself but of the Father alone. Were he God of himself he would not be one with the Father so there would be two without any beginning. Which is impossible. We postulate three distinct properties, the Father's property is that

he comes from none but himself. The Son's property is that he does not come from himself: he descends from the Father by way of nativity. The Holy Ghost's property is that he comes from the Father not as being born: he proceeds from them twain, both Father and Son, not as a birth but as love. For two who are sundered in Person cannot together bear one but they can bear mutual love. The Holy Ghost is not born because he proceeds out of two and not merely out of the Father, albeit certain doctors do maintain that the Holy Ghost comes from the Father alone and not from the Son at all. This is false; for when the Father gat the Son he gave him his whole nature as well as all perfection, which goes with being of that nature, the Father withholding nothing from his Son. It follows that the Father cannot alone bring forth the Holy Ghost as he alone did get the Son. Had these doctors envisaged it aright, they would no doubt have said the same. They were speaking without understanding. So it is wrong to say the Son is God from himself and not from the Father. The Son may be said to bring forth the Spirit yet not from himself: from the Father whence he comes himself. Thus the Holy Ghost comes from them twain and not from one; but not as being twain, as being one. So much for the Son and filiation.

It may be asked concerning Spirit and spiration, Can we use these terms or not? Is there some objection, which makes it inadmissible? Filiation is found latent in the nature of the Father, that is plain, seeing he is not merely brought forth out of him. Herein lies the objection to speaking of Spirit and spiration. Let us see if we can find precisely the right meaning of Spirit and spiration. We have here two and one. That is the difference between Spirit and spiration. In the first, when we predicate two we mean Father and Son. But by saying *in one* we refer to spiration. This same *in one* is formless: the mark of spiration. Again, when we say *in another* that signifies Spirit, who is another than Father and Son in his Person.

LV[1]

GOD MADE THE POOR FOR THE RICH

God made the poor for the rich and the rich for the poor. Lend to God, he will repay you. Some say they believe in God who believe not God. It is a greater thing to believe in God than to believe God. I may trust a man to pay me back five shillings

[1] See also Wackernagel, No. lix, from which the last sentence is added.

I have lent him yet not trust in the man. So if a man believes in God why will he not trust him to repay what he lends his poor? He who gives up all things gets back an hundredfold. If he expects his hundredfold he shall get nothing: he is not giving up the things but getting more, an hundredfold. Our Lord repays an hundredfold the man who leaves all things. Letting go all things he gets an hundredfold return and eternal life. If it happens to a man in the course of riddance to get again the very same he gave, then, not giving all, he shall get nothing. Anyone who looks to find anything in God, knowledge, understanding or devotion or whatever it may be, even if he find it will not be finding God but knowledge, understanding or devotion: all things I heartily commend; but to him not lasting.

Seek nothing at all, not understanding nor gnosis nor piety nor inwardness nor peace but only God's will. The soul who is as she by rights should be, would not be satisfied even if God gave her his whole Godhead; it would no more console her than his giving her a fly. God-knowledge is vain apart from God-will. In God's will are all things, eternal and perfect and pleasant to God; but out of God's will things are all of them naught and not pleasant to God and not perfect. Never pray for any mortal thing; if thou must pray for anything at all, pray for God's will and nothing else for therein thou hast all. To ask for aught beside means getting nothing. In him is naught but one and one is indivisible and aught save one is part, not one. God is one and anything extra that is sought or found is not God but a fraction. Peace, intuition or anything else than simply God's will is for self-love and is naught; but if he seeks God's naked will then whatever he may find or have revealed to him therein that man may take as a gift of God without ever thinking or looking to see if it is of nature or of grace or from whence or in what wise it may be: he need have no anxiety whatever on that score; he is going the right way and while following the broad lines of the christian life there is no need to scrutinize each detail. He can just take each thing from God, and whatever comes accept it as the best for him, and have no fear of meeting on his lonely road with anything, do what he may, that hinders his awareness of the love of God, which to him is all that matters.

People have a way of saying, when it falls to them to do or suffer something, 'If only I knew it was the will of God I would gladly suffer and put up with it.' Dear God! what a question for a sick man to ask, does God intend me to be ill? He ought to know it is the will of God by the very fact of being ill. And so with other things. Whatever comes accept it as God's will, pure and simple. Some, when things prosper with them, inwardly

or outwardly, praise God and have faith in him. They will say, for instance, ' I have gotten four quarters of corn this year and as many of wine: I put my trust in God.' Nay, I say thou dost trust in the corn and the wine.

The soul is created for good so great, so high, that she cannot rest in any mode; all the time she is hastening past modes to the eternal good, to God who is her goal. This is not won in the heat of the assault, in the stress and strain of action or of passion, but by gentleness and true humility and self-abnegation in that and everything that may betide. A man should not dragoon himself: ' Thou shalt do this at whatever cost,' that would be wrong for so he lends importance to himself. If anything should chance to grieve or trouble or disquiet him, again he would be wrong for that means giving way to self. When out of the depths of humiliation he calls on God for counsel and bending low before him accepts with quiet faith whatever he may send, then he is right. It all depends, in teaching and advising, if a man will listen, disregarding everything but God. Many and various are the ways of putting this, but it promotes the proper play of conscience to refuse attention to casual happenings and for a man when he is by himself to make an offering of his will to God and then proceed to take each thing alike from God, grace or whatever comes, inward or outward.

Whoso sees aught of God's sees naught of God. The righteous man does not need God. What I have I am not in need of. He serves for naught, he cares for naught, he has God and that is all he needs. As God is higher than man so is he readier to give than man is to receive. Not by fasting and good works can we gauge our progress in the virtuous life, but a sure sign of growth is a waxing love for the eternal and a waning interest in temporal things. The man who owns an hundred crowns and gives them all in the name of God to found a cloister is doing a good work. And yet I say, it were a better to despise and naught himself for love of God. It behoves a man in all he does to turn his will in God's direction and keeping only God in view to forge ahead without a qualm, not wondering, am I right or am I doing something wrong? If the painter had to plan out every brush-mark before he made his first he would not paint at all. And if, going to some place, we had first to settle how to put the front foot down, we should never get there. Follow your principles and keep straight on; you will come to the right place, that is the way.

This is a collation of Meister Eckhart's.

LVI

THE EMANATION AND RETURN

Nolite timere eos qui corpus occidunt, animum autem occidere non possunt (*Matt.* 10_{28}). 'Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.' Spirit does not kill spirit; spirit gives life to spirit. 'Them which kill you' are flesh and blood which die by one another. Man's most precious possession is blood, when it is well-liking. The most mischievous thing in man is blood when it is ill-liking. When the blood rules the flesh, the person is humble and patient and chaste and has all the virtues. But where the flesh has the upper hand he is supercilious, hasty, and lascivious and has all the vices. Praised be St John the glorified of God himself.

Now mark. I will say something I never said before. When God created the heavens and the earth and all creatures, God did no work; he had no work to do; there was no activity in him. God said: 'We will make a likeness.' To create is easy: we do it when and as we will. But what I make, I make myself, with myself and in myself, imprinting my image clearly in it. 'We will make a likeness': not the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Ghost: we, the holy Trinity in concert, we will make a likeness.

When God made man he wrought in the soul his like work, his ever-cherished, his working work. This work was a great one, no less than the soul: she was the work of God. God's nature, his being and his godhood depend upon his working in the soul. God be praised, God be praised! God works in the soul; he is in love with his work. The work is love and the love is God. God loves himself and his nature, his essence and his Godhead. In the love wherein he loves himself therein God loves all creatures. With the love wherewith God loves himself therewith he loves all creatures, not as creatures: creatures as God. In the love wherein God loves himself therein he loves all things.

Again I say what I have never said before. God enjoys himself. In the joy wherein God enjoys himself therein he enjoys all creatures. With the joy wherewith God enjoys himself he enjoys all creatures, not as creatures: creatures as God. In the joy wherein God enjoys himself, therein he enjoys all things. And mark. All creatures tend towards their ultimate perfection. Apprehend me, I beseech you, by the eternal ever-valid truth and by my soul. For yet again I say a thing I never said before: God and Godhead are as different as earth is from heaven. Moreover I declare: the outward and the inward man are as different, too, as earth and heaven. God is higher, many thousand miles.

Yet God comes and goes. But to resume my argument: God enjoys himself in all things. The sun sheds his light upon all creatures, and anything he sheds his beams upon absorbs them, yet he loses nothing of his brightness. All creatures sacrifice their life for being. Creatures all come into my mind and are rational in me. I alone prepare all creatures to return to God. Beware, all of you, what ye do.

To return to my inner and my outer man. I see the lilies in the field, their gaiety, their colour, all their leaves. But I do not see their fragrance. Why? Because what I give out is in me. What I am saying is in me and I speak it forth of me. My outward man relishes creatures as creatures, as wine and bread and meat. But my inner man relishes things not as creature but as the gift of God. And again to my innermost man they savour not of God's gift but of ever and aye. I take a bowl of water and place a mirror in it and set it in the sun. The sun sends forth his light-rays both from his disc and also from the bottom of the bowl, suffering thereby no diminution. The reflection of the mirror in the sun is in the sun. The sun and it are thus what it is. And so with God. God is in the soul with his nature, his essence and his Godhood, but he is not on that account the soul. The soul's reflection is in God. God and she are thus what she is. There God is all creatures. There God's utterance is God.

While I subsisted in the ground, in the bottom, in the river and fount of Godhead, no one asked me where I was going or what I was doing: there was no one to ask me. When I was flowing all creatures spake God. If I am asked, Brother Eckhart, when went ye out of your house? Then I must have been in. Even so do all creatures speak God. And why do they not speak the Godhead? Everything in the Godhead is one, and of that there is nothing to be said. God works, the Godhead does no work, there is nothing to do; in it is no activity. It never envisaged any work. God and Godhead are as different as active and inactive. On my return to God, where I am formless, my breaking through will be far nobler than my emanation. I alone take all creatures out of their sense into my mind and make them one in me. When I go back into the ground, into the depths, into the well-spring of the Godhead, no one will ask me whence I came or whither I went. No one missed me: God passes away.

All happiness to those who have listened to this sermon. Had there been no one here I must have preached it to the poor-box. Some poor souls will go back home and say, I shall settle down and eat my bread and serve God. Verily I say, they persist in error, and will never have the power to strive for or to win what those others do who follow Christ in poverty and exile. Amen.

LVII

SUCH IS THE NATURE OF GOD

A master cries, Dear God, how well for me did my love bear fruit!

Our Lord says to every loving soul, 'I was made man for you, and if ye are not God for me ye wrong me. I in my God-nature did dwell in your man's nature, so that none guessed my godly might seeing me walk like any other man. And even so shall ye in your humanity hide you in my divinity, and none shall guess your human weakness: your life being all divine they shall see naught in you but God.' This does not mean soft words or pious mien or much parade of holiness, so that our name borne far and and wide is highly honoured by the friends of God; nor that as cherished and elect of God we fondly think God has forgot all creatures but ourselves and anything we ask of God is straightway done. No, not by any means! That is not what God wants of us: all the other way.

He would have us found wholly unmoved when people call us cheats and liars or whatever it may be whereby we are bereft of our fair name; and not only evil speaking but evil deeds as well: denying us our animal necessities; and not only temporal needs but bodily hurt. (He would that) our sickness, or whatever ill it be, should help us in our bodily work; that we should always do our best despite that people turn it to the worst account; further, that we should suffer in this sense not alone from people but from God as well, who, withholding from us his present consolation, builds as it were a wall between us and when we bring our work to him seeking his help and comfort, he behaves towards us as if he shut his eyes and refused to see or hear: he leaves us in our need to stand and fight alone, like Christ forsaken by his Father. Then hiding us in his divinity, behold us unbowed down by woe and with no other help than the words Christ uttered, 'Father, they will be done.'

Such is the nature of God that we know it by nothing better than naught.—How, by naught?—By getting rid of all means, not merely by spurning the world and the possession of virtue: I must let virtue go if I would see God face to face; not that I should flout virtue, but virtue being innate in me I transcend virtue. When a man's mind has lost touch with every thing then, not till then, it comes in touch with God. A heathen philosopher has said, nature cannot transcend nature. Ergo, no creature can see God. If he is seen it must be in light that is supernatural. Theologians have a question, When God uplifts

the soul above himself and above all creatures and leads her home into himself, why does he not raise up the body too so that it has no earthly needs ? One of the masters—I think St Augustine—answers this as follows. When the soul attains to union with God then at last the body enjoys all things to God's glory. Through man all creatures have flowed forth and the body's rational use of creatures is not a drawback to the soul : it is an added dignity, for creatures can find no better way of returning to their source than in the righteous man who of his soul can say that even for an instant it has been absorbed in union with God. For then there is no obstacle between God and the soul, and as far as the soul follows God into the desert of his Godhead so far the body follows the bodily Christ into the desert of his willing poverty : as the soul is united with his deity so the body is atoned in Christ by the operation of true virtue. Well, then may the heavenly Father say, ' This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' for not only has he gotten in the soul his only Son : he has begotten her his only Son.

From the very bottom of my heart I say, Man, how can aught afflict thee or be hard to bear when thou considerest that he who yonder subsisted in the form of God and in the day of his eternity and in the glory of the saints, and who before was born the splendour and substance of God, did enter the prison, the trap of thy sense-nature which is so unclean that aught, however pure, is besmirched and fouled by coming near it, yet notwithstanding this he abode there for thy sake ? What is there thou wouldst not gladly suffer, reading of the bitterness of thy Lord and God, pondering the afflictions, all the woes, that did befall him ? The scorn and contumely he bore from king and soldier, from knaves and passers by his cross ? How the glory of the eternal light was mocked and scorned and tortured ? Behold, what innocence, compassion and true love, and nowhere shown to me more clearly than where the love-power pierced his heart. Make thee then a bundle of the woes of thy Lord God and let it lie between thy breasts. Regard and realize his virtues, how all his works make for thy weal, and see thou pay him back in his own coin his infamous and shameful death and his pain-bearing nature wherein he, sinless, suffered for thy sin as if it had been his ; as he says in the Prophets concerning his afflictions, ' Lo, I suffer for my sins,' and speaking of the fruits of all his labours, ' By your works shall ye possess this kingdom ! ' calling our sins his sins and his works our works ; and he has answered for our sins as though he had committed them, whereas we profit by his works as though they were our own. And this should make our labour light, for the good knight laments not his own wounds, seeing his king who is wounded with

him. He offers us the drink he drank himself. He asks nothing of us but what he has already done or suffered. We ought to suffer gladly, for God did nothing else while he sojourned upon earth. May we in God's nature so transcend and lose our human nature, all our weakness, that nothing should be found in us but good alone, So help us God. Amen.

LVIII[1]

DIVINE UNDERSTANDING

Lord God Almighty, all things are in thy power. Power and lordship lie in two things, in freedom and in the possession of many good things in peace. What is freedom? A heathen philosopher says, 'That thing is free which cleaves to naught and to which naught cleaves.' So there is nothing free but the first cause, that is, the cause of all things.

To lordship belongs the possession of many good things and beautiful. God is all good in all; hence he possesses himself in all. What God has, that is he in all. The love and will, the wisdom, the goodness we say that he has, these he is. If God is this, he is not naught, for God was prior to naught. God has no before nor after: but naught has a sequel; its sequel is aught. Naught's foregoer was God, for he was prior to naught. Naught's issue is aught. God then has no before nor after. Lo, the cause of all things, self-subsistent, discriminate light which is himself! God is a light shining in itself in silent stillness. The one light, the one essence itself, which knows and understands itself. The understanding of this unique light is the light from the light, it is the eternal Person of the Son from the eternal Person of the Father. The Father spoke one Word, namely, his Son. In this only Word he spoke all things. The Word of the Father is none other than his understanding of himself. The understanding of the Father understands that he understands, and that his understanding understands is the same as that he is who is understanding. That is, the light from the light.

Job says, God spake one Word; this was his own conception of himself: it was his Son. In this one conception he conceives all things; he sees them as issuing from nothing. They are that in themselves. But as subsisting eternally in him, they are without themselves. What they were (without) themselves, was he himself: God is nothing but God, for God is without other. All creatures are a light, for they are conceived in the light of unity

[1] See Pfeiffer, *Zt. f. dtsch. Alt.*, Bd. 8 (2), 1850. For authorship see Preger's *Geschichte*, p. 319.

and eternity. Creatures flowing forth as light reveal the hidden light. As St James says, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift come down from above from the Father of lights.' We may deduce from this that all things are one light radiated by the Father for the purpose of revealing his own hidden light. And as all things have been one light proceeding forth, so also they are all one light which is flowing back, if they turn not away therefrom of their own free will. Those who are steadfast in the face of multiplicity, behold what light and grace are revealed to them! For the sovran good is so ordered towards the soul that she receives it not except by means. As St Dionysius says, 'The means is light: grace that illumines understanding.' What is understanding? Understanding means seeing a thing quite clearly and without mistake. St Dionysius says, 'Disengage thyself entirely from things if thou wouldst understand the highest good, God namely.' What are we to understand by God? That he is the one power. Let us therefore unify ourselves so that this one power may energise in us. He is also the good which moves things towards their good, namely himself, albeit he himself remains unmoved. And he is perfect simplicity; and the simpler the soul is the better she understands his simplicity. How can we be perfectly simple? By departing from things and from ourselves, and knowing our own mind and all the working of the powers of the soul, except the chief one, understanding: leave that to God alone. The passive soul stands to lose all this and leave God to work without hindrance; then he begets his perfect likeness in her and conforms her to himself. Then she understands with him and loves with him. This is perfection. It is sometimes asked, Do we love God with the love wherewith the Father and the Son love one another? Let us consider.

Two kinds of love belong to us. One is the virtue. In this love we go on growing and any good we do in this love wins us eternal merit. But the love of the Father and the Son knows no increase for it is the Holy Ghost. Thus our love is as nothing compared with the love of the Father and the Son: it is the virtue that we grow with.—The other love which is in us is the love of the Father and the Son. As St Paul says, 'God's love is poured into our heart.' In giving us his love God has given us his Holy Ghost so that we can love him with the love wherewith he loves himself. We love God with his own love; awareness of it deifies us.

Intuition of the Sovran Good, that is God! To have that is to have the life most worth of any creature. God is willing his own clear conception and his own delight. What is willing in the Godhead? It is the Father watching the play of his own nature.

What is this play ? It is his eternal Son. There has always been this play going on in the Father-nature. Play and audience are the same. The Father's view of his own nature is his Son. The Father embraces his own nature in the quiet darkness of his eternal essence which is known to none except himself. The glance returned by his own nature is his eternal Son. So the Son embraces the Father in his nature for he is the same as his Father in his nature. Thus from the Father's embrace of his own nature there comes this eternal playing of the Son. This play was played eternally before all creatures. As it is written in the Book of Wisdom, 'Prior to creatures, in the eternal now, I have played before the Father in his eternal stillness.' The Son has eternally been playing before the Father as the Father has before his Son. The playing of the twain is the Holy Ghost in whom they both disport themselves and he disports himself in both. Sport and players are the same. Their nature proceeding in itself. 'God is a fountain flowing into itself,' as St Dionysius says. The Father has eternally been loving himself in his Son just as the Son has been loving himself in the Father eternally. Their mutual love is the Holy Ghost: the third Person, who proceeds from the other two as love. The essence of the Godhead begets not. The Father's Person begets the Person of the Son eternally and together they pour forth their Holy Ghost: their mutual love. Father and Son are the pouring-in and the Holy Breath is the thing inpoured, identical in nature with them both. Did the essence of the Deity beget there would be more than one essence; but there is not. There is one essence which gives all things life and being, for the Son is born out of the heart of the Father eternally and shall bring back into it again all things which issued forth therefrom in him. As Christ declares, 'When I am exalted I will draw all things to me.' The Holy Ghost proceeded forth as love to make our spirits one with him. The Son takes back with him all the things that issued forth in him and the Holy Ghost returns with all that he expired. St Dionysius says, 'Son and Holy Spirit are the light of the God-bearing Godhead.' St Philip cried, 'Lord, show us the Father and we shall be satisfied.' Our Lord answered and said, 'Philip, he who seeth me seeth my Father.' The Son revealed the mysteries of the Father for he was like him in all things and of one nature with him. Nothing satisfies the soul except the Father who is altogether good and absolutely simple. The more simple the soul the more like God she is. God spake never a word but one: his simple understanding. If the soul is to be simple she must withdraw from multiplicity into his one conception. That can happen here only now and then.

The soul has three understandings. First, the understanding of things that are above her. Next, the understanding of herself. From this knowledge she passes to the third: the one alone. Therein she loses herself speaking never a word but possessing herself in silence for God has rapt her up above herself to him; she is not and knows not by herself. What she understands she understands with him and even this she must forgo, must leave to that wherewith she understands it. As St Dionysius says, 'Make thyself passive, void of definition. One single glimpse of the abstraction that God is, more unifies the soul with God than all the works of holy Christendom.'

Try diligently, therefore, to get some grasp of truth: in the conception of it thine own wont is altogether lost and thou dost live in truth. Those exalted ones who stand therein can never be disjoined from God. They are the blessed who know God in himself eternally. God is unchangeable, so these can never more be separated from him. It behoves us therefore to depart from all unlikeness to our highest good.

LIX

THE JUST LIVES IN ETERNITY

Justus in perpetuum vivet apud dominum est mersce ejus (*Sap.* 5_{16}). We read to-day in the epistle the wise man's words, 'The just lives in eternity.' I have defined elsewhere what a just man is, but here I say in another sense, that man is just (*i.e.* righteous) who is informed with and transformed into justice (righteousness). The just lives in God and God in him, for God is born in the just and the just in God: at every virtue of the just God is born and is rejoiced, and not only every virtue but every action of the just wrought out of the virtue of the just and in justice; thereat God is glad, aye, thrilled with joy, there is nothing in his ground that does not dance for joy. To unenlightened people this is matter for belief but the illumined know

The just seeks nothing in his work; only thralls and hirelings ask anything for work, or work for any why. If thou wouldst be informed with, transformed into, righteousness, have no ulterior purpose in thy work; form no idea in thee in time or in eternity, not reward nor happiness nor this nor that, for verily all such works are dead. Believe me, the idea of God in thee, if thou dost work with that in view, means death to all thy works; they are good works spoilt and thou dost sin to boot, for thou doest like the gardener who first plants the garden and then roots up the trees but still expects a crop. So thou dost

throw away good work. If thou wouldst live and have thy work live also thou must be dead to all things and reduced to naught. It belongs to creature to make aught from aught, but God's idiosyncrasy is making aught from naught, wherefore, if God is to make aught of thee or in thee, thou must first come to naught; so enter thou into thine own ground and work; works wrought by thee there are all living.

He says, 'his reward is with the Lord.' He says *with*, meaning that the reward of the just is where God is himself; that the happiness of the just and God's happiness are one; the righteous are in bliss where God is in bliss. St John says, 'The Word was with God.' He says *with* because God is righteousness and the righteous are like him. Whoever is in righteousness is in God and is God.

Further, with regard to the word, just. He does not say, the just man or just angel, he simply says, the just. The Father begets his Son the just and the just his Son; every virtue of the just, every act done by the just, is nothing but the Son being begotten by the Father. The Father never stops, he is always trying to beget his Son in me, according to the scriptures: 'For Sion's sake will I not hold my peace and for Jerusalem I will not rest till the righteous is revealed and shineth like the lightning.' Sion is the height of living, the contemplative life, and Jerusalem the profoundest calm. Not for the most exalted life nor for the deepest peace will God desist until the righteous is revealed. God and God alone works in the just. If thy works are prompted by anything external, then thy works are dead. For thy works to be living it must be God that prompts them in the innermost recesses of thy soul: that is thy life and that alone.

Further I declare: if it seems to thee that one virtue is greater than another, if thou dost cultivate it more and value it above the rest, then thou art not loving it as it is in righteousness nor is it God who is working in thee. As long as a man prizes or leans to one virtue more than to another he neither takes nor feels it as it is by rights, and he is not righteous. The just man loves and practises virtue as a whole, in righteousness, as righteousness itself. It says in holy writ: 'Before the fabricated world, I am.' He says, I am before, above. Meaning that in eternity, exalted above time, man does one work with God. People sometimes ask how man can do the work that God was doing a thousand years ago and in a thousand years will be doing still. They cannot understand it. But in eternity is no before nor after; the happenings of the past millennium and the future one and now, in eternity are all the same. God's doings of a thousand years ago and now and a thousand years to come are but one single act. It follows that

the man who is exalted above time into eternity will do with God what he did in the past and also what he does in the next thousand years. This is matter of knowledge to the wise and of belief to fools.

St Paul says, 'We are eternally chosen in the Son and we should never rest until we get to be what we have been in him eternally.' The Father ceaselessly endeavours to get us born in his Son so that we may be the same as his Son is. The Father is begetting his Son, and in his begetting the Father finds so much peace and pleasure that his entire nature is expended in it. That which is in God moves him to beget; by his ground, his nature and his essence the Father is moved to generation. And you must know, God is born in us as soon as all our soul-powers, which hitherto have been tied and bound, are absolutely free (and passive) and when the mind is stilled and sense troubles us no longer. Then the Father begets in us his Son. Then we keep as free from forms and images as God, and find ourselves as free from likeness as God is void and free in his very self. When the Father bears his Son in us we shall know the Father with the Son and the Holy Ghost in both of them and the holy Trinity, and therein all things as a mere naught in God. Then time and number are no more. God's essence neither does nor suffers, nor does his nature suffer, but it works.

Sometimes a light is apparent in the soul and she fondly thinks it is the Son, whereas it is nothing but a light. When the Son reveals himself within the soul the love of the Holy Ghost is revealed at the same time. It is the nature of the Father to beget his Son, and it is of the nature of the Son for me to be begotten in him and in his nature; it is of the nature of the Holy Breath for me to be consumed therein and melted and reduced entirely to love. One who is thus in love and altogether love, will think that God loves none but him and knows no love for anyone nor yet from anyone but him alone.

Some doctors hold that the spirit finds its beatitude in love. Some make him find it in beholding God. I say he finds it not in love nor in gnosis nor in vision. But, it may be asked, has the spirit in eternal life no vision of God? Yes and no. Once born he neither sees nor pays heed to God. But in being born he does see God. The spirit is in bliss then, not in its begetting but as being begotten, for then it lives as the Father lives, impartible, in its abstract and essential nature. Wherefore do thou turn from things and realize thyself in thy naked essence, for outside essence all is accident and the accidental makes for why. Let us live in the eternal, So help us God. Amen.

LX

LIKES LOVE AND UNITE

Meister Eckhart says, Likes love and unite with one another; unlikes hate and shun each other. According to one master, no two things are so unlike as earth and heaven. Earth knew itself by nature alien and unlike to heaven. Wherefore it fled from heaven to the lowest place and there bides still lest haply it draw night at all to heaven. And the celestial nature grew aware that earth had fled and had possessed itself of the lowest place. And that is how the heavens came to empty themselves out into the earth in fruitful wise, indeed the masters say the broad expanse of heaven does not withhold a needle-point in size, it brings itself forth every whit as fruitfulness on earth. So earth is the most fruitful of all mortal creatures.

Likewise I say about the man who has brought himself to naught in himself, in God and in all creatures. That man assumes the lowest place and God is bound to empty himself whole into his soul, else would he not be God. I warrant you by God's eternal truth, that into any man who is brought low God pours out his whole self in all his might, so utterly that neither of his life, his being, nor his nature, nay, nor of his perfect Godhead, does he keep aught back, he empties out the whole thereof as fruits into that wight who in abandonment to God assumes the lowest place.

To-day as I pursued my way pondering my discourse and wondering how to make you understand, I hit on an analogy. If ye can follow this my meaning will be plain and eke the drift of all my teaching. The analogy is with my eye and wood. My eye when it is open is an eye. It is the same eye, shut; and the wood is neither more or less by reason of its seeing. Now mark me well. Suppose my eye, being one and single in itself, falls on the wood in seeing, then though each thing stops as it is, yet in the actual seeing they are so far the same that we can argue: my eye is the wood and the wood my eye. Now if the wood were free from matter and wholly immaterial, as my eyesight is, then we could truly say that in my actual vision wood and eye are essentially the same. If this is so with corporal things, then how much more with ghostly. Remember, my eye is far more one with some transoceanic sheep's that I have never seen than with my ear, albeit with this it has organic union. The sheep's eye works like mine, and therefore I impute to it more unity of action than I can do to eye and ear which have their different functions.

I have often spoken of the light within the soul, which is uncreated and eke uncreaturely. It is this light I am so often hinting

at in my discourses, it is the light which lays straight hold of God, bare and unveiled, as he is in himself; that is to say, it catches him in the act of self-begetting. Hence I can truly say this light is rather one with God than with any of my powers wherewith it has organic union. For know, this light within my soul is no better in its essence than the humblest, the grossest of my powers; my sight or my hearing, for example, or any other sense which is the sport of heat and cold, hunger or thirst, seeing that essence is impartible.

Now I maintain, if thou dost turn from thine own self and from created things, then in what measure thou dost this thou dost attain to unity and happiness in thy soul-spark; a thing which is immune from time and space. This spark is opposed to creatures. It has no want but just God, God as he is in himself. Not enough for it the Father or the Son or Holy Ghost, nor even all three Persons, so far as they preserve their several properties. I trow this light would not be satisfied with the alone-begotten fruit of Deity. Nay, more, and even stranger to relate, I warrant you this light is not content with the changeless impartible essence of God, which neither gives nor takes, but wants to find its source; it wants to get into its simple ground, into the silent desert whereinto no distinct thing ever pryed, not Father, Son nor Holy Ghost. At the centre, where no one abides, there this light is quenched in still stronger light, wherein it is more one than in itself, for this ground is the impartible stillness, motionless in itself, and by this immobility all things are moved and all those have their life who, recollected in themselves, do live the life of mind. May we too live this intellectual life, So help us God. Amen.

LXI

THERE COMES FORTH A ROD OUT OF THE ROOT OF JESSE

Egredietur virga de radice Jesse et flos de radice ejus ascendet et requiescet super eum spiritus domini (*Isaias* $11_{1,2}$). We read to-day in the Mass that there comes forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and out of the root comes forth a flower, and on this flower there rests, reposes, the spirit of the Lord. Jesse means a brand, which is burning; it signifies love in the abstract, where it is no more called love, where nothing adventitious exists, and in this ground where as yet nothing grows, it germinates just like, within the root, the coming shoot. The offshoot has three properties: likeness to what it shoots from, the nature of the same, and it is of exactly the same species; thirdly, it is free from all attachments, simply an emanation. Thus the Son proceeded from the

Father, as another Person with the Father, albeit in the Father essentially the same. Accordingly he says, 'Out of the root came a rod and on the rod came a flower.' My loving is a heavenly matter, for likes all end in *same* and *the same* is in the ground, and a thing that grows out of another is in every respect the same kind. An apple grafted on a pear-tree has the taste of both. It is not so here: this has the flavour of the one alone; itself is not therein and yet it is therein. It could never come out were it not first within in the abstract, in brooding essence. The wine is in the vine: it is and it is not.

I say concerning God's freedom that it yields no nature save one. God starts with the Son, and the Son is another than the Father who is power, and from them twain there blossoms forth the Holy Ghost. Our philosophers teach that the sun draws the flowers out of the roots through the stem, timelessly wellnigh and too subtly for any eye to follow. The soul, which has no nature in her ground, the ground of love, where she is love, emerges from this nature where she is stored in God. Whatever enters this being has much the same being. At the coming of the bride he devotes himself to her and works with all his might within his ground, in his innermost, where naught exists, where activity stops altogether. The tree of the Godhead grows in this ground and the Holy Ghost sprouts from its root. The flower that blossoms, love, is the Holy Ghost. In this Holy Ghost the soul flowers with the Father and the Son, and on this flower there rests and reposes the spirit of the Lord. He could not repose had he not rested first upon the Spirit. The Father and the Son rest on the Spirit, and the Spirit reposes upon them as on its cause. What is rest? St Augustine says, rest is complete lack of motion: body and soul bereft of their own nature. One philosopher says, God's idiosyncrasy is immutability. That is, all creatures. Man as transcending motion. *Jesse* means a fire and a burning; it signifies the ground of divine love and also the ground of the soul. Out of this ground the rod grows, *i.e.* in the purest and highest; it shoots up out of this virgin soil at the breaking forth of the Son. Upon the rod opens a flower, the flower of the Holy Ghost. We beseech the Lord our God that we may rest in him and he in us to his glory. So help us God. Amen.

LXII

WHAT MANNER OF CHILD SHALL THIS BE?

Puis puer iste erit? Etenim manus domini erat cum illo (*Luc.* 1_{66}). 'What manner of child shall this be? The hand of the Lord is with him.' The hand of the Lord means the Holy Ghost, for two

reasons. First, because work is wrought with the hand; and next, because it is one with the arm and with the body. All human actions start in the heart, extend to the limbs, and are done by the hand; so the seat of the soul being chiefly in the heart, in the heart is the mainspring of her energies. Likewise it is the Father who is the fount and origin of all divine activity, and the Son is represented by his arm; as it says in the *Magnificat*, 'he hath shewed strength with his arm.' Divine power proceeds from the body via the arm to the hand, whereby is signified the Holy Ghost, even as the soul which courses through the body and in material things proclaims her ghostly properties. Wherefore we argue that the Holy Ghost is meant by the hand which wrought in this child.

Now mark the state of the soul wherein God is apt to work. He speaks of a child, suggesting pure joy, an unblemished state. The soul God works in must be pure and clean. A master says, 'The eternal wisdom tarries in Zion, her rest is in that pure city'; *Zion* meaning a height and a watch-tower (or resting-place). Again, she must be withdrawn from mortal, impermanent things. And thirdly, she must be on the watch for coming hindrances. God comes out of kindness because of the love he bears to the soul. He has endowed her with a godly light, the reflection of himself, so that he may be able freely to energise in her in his own likeness. Love cannot be without finding or making alike. Suppose I have bidden a man, unless he have gotten some liking for me, he will never willingly follow me. And so with the soul which follows God; God's members must all do his bidding whether they want to or no. If they do it reluctantly, then it is painful to him; no work is ever pleasant that is done without liking.

No creature can do more than in her lies. The soul makes headway solely by the light that God has given her, that being her own, presented her by God as a bridal gift. God comes in love with intent that the soul may arise, that in love she may energise above herself. For love cannot be without finding her like or making alike, except in as far as God works in love passing soul. Soul does not ply the work of grace (since that is not her nature) till she is gotten yonder, where God is plying himself, where the work is as noble as the worker, his own nature, to wit. As with light, for example. In wood it produces its like: heat and fire, and the harder the wind blows the fiercer the flame. Now put love for the fire and the Holy Ghost for the wind: the stronger breathes the Holy Ghost the more all-consuming its fire, albeit not sudden; it keeps pace with the growth of the soul. If the whole man were consumed at once it would not be well, for one might live a thousand years and still go on waxing in love. Light

acts upon flowers, making them grow and bear fruit; in living creatures it makes for life; in man it makes for happiness. This comes by the grace of God which raises the soul to a higher power; for if the soul is to be like God she must transcend herself. Amen.

LXIII

ATONEMENT

Manete in me (*Joh.* 15_4); *beatus vir, qui in sapientia morabitur* (*Eccl.* 14_{22}). 'Abide in me,' says our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel; and the other text from the epistle says, 'Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom.' Both mean exactly the same thing. Mark then what is required of a man to dwell in him, *i.e.* in God. He requires three things. First, to renounce himself and all things, not cleaving to aught that is grasped by the senses within nor abiding in any creature existing in time or in eternity. Again, he must love neither this good nor that good: he must love good for good's sake, since nothing is good or desirable except in so far as God is therein. We ought to love things no whit more than just as much as we love God in them; nor is it right to love God for his heaven's sake nor for the sake of anything at all except the good he is in his own self. Whoso loves him for aught abides not in him, but abides in the thing he is loving him for. If then ye desire to dwell in him, ye must love him for naught but himself. Thirdly, he must take God not as good nor as right, but he must apprehend him in his pure and virgin substance where he is apprehending himself. Goodness and right are the garment of God which is covering him. Do thou then strip God of all coverings: discover him in his vestibule bare, just in his naked self. So shall ye abide in him.

Whoso abides in him thus has five things. First, betwixt him and God there is no difference at all, they are one. Angels are many, beyond number, they can do nothing without number; they are numberless because of their simplicity. The three Persons in God, who counts as three, they, again, have number. But betwixt man and God is not alone no difference but no multiplicity: nothing but one. The second is, that he is conceiving his happiness in that same virgin nature where God is conceiving himself and conserving himself. Thirdly, his knowledge is one with God-knowledge, and this knowing consists in co-operation and con-science in God's operation and science, to wit, the actual energy and gnosis at work towards the end that God may be ever being born in man.

How is God ever being born in man? Look you. Suppose a

man hews out and brings to light the divine form which God has wrought into his nature, then God's image in him stands revealed. Birth must be taken in the sense of revelation, the Son being said to be born of the Father because he reveals the Father as father. So the more and the more clearly God's image shows in man the more evidently God is born in him. And by God's eternal birth in him we understand that his image stands fully revealed. The fifth thing is that this man is ever being born in God. How can a man be ever being born in God? Lo! by revealing this form in a man the man grows like unto God, for the form of man is the same as the image of God which is God in every respect. The more he is like God the more he is one. So man's eternal birth in God we understand to mean ideal man refulgent in God's image, which is God in form and matter, wherewith man is the same. This oneness of man and God is a matter of likeness of form, man being Godlike in form. So when we talk of man being one with God and take him to be one with God by nature, we refer to the exemplary element in him which is on a par with God, and not to his created nature. When we look at him as God we are blind to him as creature; remembering his deity we forget his creature-nature; withal this same oblivion must not be construed to mean the negation of his created nature, rather the affirmation of God in him whom we are regarding as God. Christ, for example, who is both God and man: what time we are considering his manhood we disregard his Godhead; not that we are denying him his Godhood, we simply ignore it for the nonce. And hence the explanation of St Augustine's dictum, 'What a man loves a man is.' If he loves a stone he is that stone, if he loves a man he is that man, if he loves God—nay, I durst not say more; were I to say, he is God, ye might stone me. I do but teach you the scriptures. Man being all meet for God is conformed to, informed with and transformed into, the divine uniformity wherein he is one with God. All this man gets by abiding within.

Now mark the fruits borne by a man when he is one with God: together with God he is bearing all creatures and big with beatitude for every creature in virtue of being one with him.

The other text from the epistle says, 'Blessed is the man that continues in wisdom.' He says, 'in wisdom,' wisdom being a feminine noun and feminine nouns denote passivity. Now in God we posit both action and passion, for the Father is doing and the Son is suffering, this being characteristic of born natures. Eternal born wisdom, wherein all things stand distinct, is the Son, and that is why he says, 'Blessed is the man that continues in wisdom.' 'Blessed is the man,' he says. Now as I have often told you, there are two powers in the soul: one is the man and the other is

the woman. He says, 'Blessed is the man.' The faculty of soul we call the man is the chief power of the soul, wherein God is a naked light; for nothing but God enters into this power and this power is ever in God: the man who has gotten all things in this power has gotten them not as being things, he has them as being in God. We ought to abide all the time in this power because in this power all things are the same. Thus abiding in all things alike and knowing them all in God as the same, man possesses all things; he has discarded their grossest part and has gotten them now in their good and desirable nature. In this wise he possesses them yonder for God in his own nature is unable to forbear, he is obliged to give thee everything he ever made and his own self to boot. Blessed is the man who abides all the time in this power, he is ever-abiding in God. May we abide at all times in God, So help us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LXIV

THE SWIFT RIVER

Fluminis impetus lætificat civitatem dei: sanctificavit tabernaculum suum altissimus (*Psalm* 45_5). 'The sudden or swift river makes glad the city of God.' Here we must note three things. First, the swift stream; next, the city it serves; thirdly, the benefit it brings.

The prophet knows not how to stem the torrent of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost flows into the soul as fast as she is poured forth in humility and so far as she has gotten the capacity. He fills all the room he can find. Consider, next, what city it is it flows through. It is really the soul. A city is something enclosed and centred within. And so must the soul be whereinto God flows. She must be safe from outside alarms, her forces assembled within. According to St John, the twelve apostles were gathered together when they received the Holy Ghost. Even so the soul must be gathered and brought to herself in order to welcome this divine stream which fills to the full her cup of delight.

I sometimes say, beginners of the virtuous life should do as he does who describes a circle: the starting-point once fixed, he keeps it so and then the trace is good. In other words, learn first to fix the heart on God, on good and on good works. Great deeds performed with shifting heart profit but little if at all. There were once two doctors. One of them declared that the good man cannot be moved. The other disagreed. What I say is, the good man may forsooth be moved, but he cannot be

changed for the worse. I trow the good man is not easily hindered. But if aught can worsen him he is not perfect.

Thirdly, the good of it. Which is, the prophet says, that 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.' It is the soul he means. Soul would not that God wrought with her aught that is mixed with creature. Some things God does with help of creature and some unaided. If the grace which is a help and which is coming through my words could enter your heart without means, as though spoken by God, your soul would forthwith be converted and she could not help it. By pronouncing God's word I become a co-worker with God and grace is mingled in me, God speaking it through me, and since I am to you as the means, it is not received intact in your soul. But the grace which is uttered by the Holy Ghost itself is received direct and imprinted unaltered in the soul what time the soul is recollected into the single power which has intuition of God. Grace springs up in the heart of the Father and flows into his Son, and in their mutual love it proceeds from the wisdom of the Son into the gift of the Holy Ghost and in the Holy Ghost is sent into the soul; and this grace is the face of God and is sealed in the soul by the Spirit of God, without means and unchanged, making the soul like God. This God does by himself unaided by creature.

No creature is noble enough to help in this work; God has not graced their nature with such excellence. But he can do it easily enough in his own perfect nature. God will not let a creature assist him in this work, so for the nonce he elevates the soul to a much higher level than her natural habitat, where she is out of reach of any creature. It were well within the compass of an angel's noble nature, provided God would let an angel serve. But that would offend the soul for in that hour she disdains the slightest taint of creature; even the light of grace wherein she is atoned would be flouted by the soul did she not know she cannot pass it by. After all, it is not natural to her, it is quite supernatural, her flouting at that moment everything that is not God, for God leads forth his bride out of creaturely values into himself and speaks with her in her heart, that is, he makes her like himself in grace. For this exalted act the soul must recollect herself.

The powers of the soul are filled full of delight by this pure infusion of grace. Grace is to God as the shine to the sun; it is one with him and it carries the soul into God and makes her exactly the same as God and as such she enjoys God's perfection. To the soul that has gotten and enjoyed divine perfection all that is not God has a bitter, nauseous savour. Then again, the soul wants the highest of all, so she cannot abide aught above her. I say, aye, and I durst maintain, she cannot even bear God being

above her and I can prove it thus. For if the soul were spirited away far beyond things to perfect freedom from them and came in touch with God in his abstract divinity, natheless she would never rest till, thrusting into that, he shall have drowned her in himself and drowned himself in her alone. What though God be far above her in nobility of nature, she cannot rest till she has gotten God, so far as it is possible to creature to conceive him. The greatest happiness in earth or heaven lies in likeness to God, which divine nature makes in the highest degree : to wit, the image of itself. And this is what the soul is striving for seeing no soul can throughly follow God without having in her the image of God. It is for us to see whether the grace we have received is every whit divine, whether it smacks of God's perfection, whether it is in common with and is emanating in his grace into whatever can receive it. Even so ought man to be flowing out into whatever can receive him. So help us God. Amen.

LXV

THE JUST LIVE FOR EVER

Justi autem in perpetuum vivent et apud dominum est merces eorum (*Sap.* 5_{16}). 'The just (or righteous) live for ever and their reward is with God.' Let us look at this carefully. It sounds quite trite and commonplace, whereas it is, in fact, a most remarkable and precious dictum. 'The just live.' Who are the just ? One scripture says, That man is just who gives to each his own. So the just are they that give to God his due and to the saints and angels theirs and to his fellow what is his. God's is glory. Who are they that glorify God ? Those who having gone out of themselves seek not their own in anything whatever it may be, or great or small ; who look for nothing over them nor under them nor yet beside them ; not mindful of possessions, of honours, comfort, pleasure, nor inwardness nor holiness nor of reward nor heaven. They have finished with all that is theirs. God glorifies them and they truly glorify God and render him what is his due.

We ought to give the saints and angels joy. Wonder of wonders ! Can a man in this life give joy to those in life eternal ? Aye, surely. Marvellous, incredible to tell, every saint rejoices, takes ineffable delight in each virtuous deed, each good desire or intention ; their joy no tongue is able to express nor any heart conceive, as I have said. And why ? Because their love to God is so immeasurably great, they hold him so right dear, that his glory is to them more than their happiness. Not alone the saints and angels, but very God himself is as much pleased thereat as though

it touched his own felicity and was vital to him, to his own delight and satisfaction. Remember then, even if we serve God for no other reason than for the exceeding joy of those in life eternal and of God himself, yet we ought to do so gladly and with all diligence. Also, we ought to help those that are in hell and succour those still living.

A man of this sort is in one way just, but in another sense the just are they that take everything alike from God no matter what it is, big and little, good and bad, all the same, no more nor less, but one thing like another. If one thing is to thee of more moment than another then thou art unjust. Thou must be rid of own-will altogether.

I was thinking just now: if God does not will what I do then I must will what he does. Some folks always want their own way; that is bad, that way lies sin. Those others are a trifle better who would like to do God's will and have no mind to go against it, yet when they are sick they wish God would choose to make them well. These people would have God, then, conforming to their will rather than they to his. We condone this although it is wrong. The just have no will at all: whatever God wills, it is all one to them, regardless of the hardship.

The just are so set on justice that were God not just they would not care a fig for God; they are so staunch to right, so perfectly indifferent to self, they reck not of the pains of hell nor of the joys of heaven nor anything whatever. Were all the pangs of those in hell and all the pain borne or to bear on earth to be the fruits of justice, they would not mind one jot, so true they are to God and right. To the just man nothing gives more pain, there is no greater hardship, than what is contrary to justness, equipoise.—How so?—If one thing can cheer and another can depress, you are not equable; to be cheerful one moment and less or not at all so in the next is uneven-tempered. But the devotee of right is so stable that what he loves is his very life, nothing can upset him, nor does he care for aught beside. St Augustine says, Where the soul loves there she is, rather than where she gives life.—Our text sounds plain and commonplace enough, but there are few who realize the actual meaning of it. One who grasps the import of justice and the just will understand all I have to say.

'The just live.' There is nothing in the world so dear as life or so desirable. No life so bad or hard but man would go on living. It is written, the nearer to death the greater the pain. But however distressful life is there is still the desire to live. Why dost thou eat? Why sleep? To live. Why long for good or glory? That knowest thou right well. But wherefore

live? For the sake of living, albeit thou ignorest for what reason thou dost live. Life is so desirable in itself, we want it for its own sake. Those who are in hell in eternal pain have no desire to lose their life, whether fiend or soul; their life is such a noble thing, flowing as it does straight from God to them. That is the reason why they want to live. What is life? God's existence is my life. If my life is God's existence then God's being is my being and God's is-ness is my is-ness, neither more nor less. They live eternally with God, on a par with him, not below him nor above. All their works are wrought with God and God's with them. St John says, 'the Word was with God.' It was exactly like and side by side with him, neither under nor over but equal.

When God created man he took the woman out of the man's side that she might be his equal. Not out of his head nor out of his feet did he make her, *i.e.* neither man nor woman, but his peer. So the just soul is like to God, by the side of God, on a level with him, not under nor yet over.

Who are they that are his like? They that are nothing like, they alone are Godlike. God's essence nothing is like, therein is no image nor form. Those souls who are his equals, to them the Father gives as equals withholding nothing from them. All the Father has to give he bestows upon this soul, provided she is just and no more to herself than to another. Her own honour, her own profit, aught of hers, she neither wants nor thinks of more than any stranger's. Personal belongings are repugnant to her, alien and remote, be they bad or good. All love of this world is based on love of self. Leave this and thou hast left the world.

In eternity the Father is bringing forth his Son just like himself. 'The Word was with God and the Word was God': the same in the same nature. I say, moreover: he has brought him forth in my soul. Not merely is she with him and he equally with her but he is in her: the Father gives birth to his Son in the soul in the very same way as he gives him birth in eternity, and in none other. He must do, willy-nilly. The Father is begetting his Son unceasingly, and furthermore, I say, he begets me his Son, as his very own Son. Moreover I declare, not only does he beget me his Son, he begets me himself and himself me: me his essence and his nature. In his nethermost deep I come welling up in his holy Breath, where there is one life, one being and one act. God's activity is one; he begets me his Son then without difference. My bodily father is not my real father except for one small portion of his nature and I am different from him: he may be dead and I alive. My heavenly Father is my real father; I am his and all I have I get from him; I am the son of him and of none other. Since the Father performs a single act therefore he

makes me his Son without any distinction. As St Paul says, 'We are wholly transformed into God and changed.'

Take an illustration. In the sacrament the bread is changed into the body of our Lord, and however much bread there is it becomes no more than the one body. Likewise were the bread to be changed into my finger it would make no more than the one finger. But suppose my finger is changed back to the bread, then the one is as much as the other; for when one thing changes to another it is identical therewith. Even so if I be changed into him and he makes me one and the same with himself, then by the living God it is also true that there is no distinction. The Father gives birth to his Son without ceasing. Once the Son is born he takes nothing from the Father, for he has it all; but while in the act of being born he is receiving from the Father.

The moral of this is that it is not right of us to ask from God as from a stranger. 'I call you not servants but friends,' said our Lord. The servant asks, the master pays. I was wondering lately whether I am willing to ask or to accept anything from God. I must take earnest counsel with myself, for by accepting anything from God I make myself inferior to God, like a servant to his master, in respect of giving. That is not the case with us in eternal life.

I once said here, and it is very true: When a man goes out of himself to find or fetch God, he is wrong. I do not find God outside myself nor conceive him excepting as my own and in me. A man ought not to work for any why, not for God nor for his glory nor for anything at all that is outside him, but only for that which is his being, his very life within him.

Some simple folk fondly imagine they are going to see God as it were standing there and they here. Not so. God and I are one in knowing. When I take God into me in loving I am going into God. Some say that happiness does not lie in knowledge but in will alone. They are wrong; if it were merely a matter of will it would not be one. Working and becoming are the same. When the carpenter stops working the house will stop becoming. Still the axe and stop the growth. God and I are one in operation: he works and I become. Fire changes to itself the fuel cast upon it, which is converted to its nature. The wood does not assimilate the fire, the fire assimilates the wood. 'We shall be changed into God so that we shall know him as he is,' says St Paul. And the manner of our knowing shall be this, I him as he me, not more or less: just the same. 'The just live eternally, and their reward is with God': identity with him, as I have said. Let us love justice for its own sake and God without a why, So help us God. Amen.

LXVI

PUBLISH THE WORD

Prædica verbum (*2 Tim.* 4_2). St Dominic says, translating the words of St Paul, 'Publish, proclaim, bring forth and propagate the Word.' It is remarkable that anything should come forth and at the same time stay within. That the Word should come forth and still remain within is very wonderful; that all creatures should come forth and remain within is very wonderful; what God gives and promises to give is most wonderful, it is incomprehensible, incredible. That is as it should be; if it were comprehensible and credible it would not be appropriate to him. God is in all things. The more he is in things the more he is out of things: the more he is within the more he is without. I have often said, God is creating the whole world now this instant. Everything God made six thousand years ago and more when he made the world, God makes now all at once. God is in all things; but as God is divine and intelligible, therefore God is nowhere so much as in the soul, and the angels if you will, in the innermost soul, in the summit of the soul. And when I say the innermost I mean the highest and when I say the highest I mean the innermost. In the depths, at the summit of the soul, they are both the same. Where time has never entered and no form was ever seen, at the centre, the summit, of the soul, there God is creating the whole world. All God's creation of six thousand years ago, all his creation of a thousand years to come, if the world lasts so long, is wrought by God in the innermost recesses, at the apex of the soul. All the past and future is contrived by God at the summit of the soul. The Father bears his Son in the innermost recesses of the soul and begets thee with his only Son, no less. But if I am Son then I must be Son the same as he is Son, and in no other way. If I am a man I am a man man-fashion. If I am the Man I am the Man Man-fashion. As St John says, 'Ye are God's sons.'

'Speak the Word, tell it abroad, pronounce it, bring forth and propagate the Word.' 'Tell it forth!' What is spoken in from without is a gross, objective thing. 'Tell it forth!' That implies that thou hast it in thee. The prophet says, 'God spake one and I heard two.' True, God did speak but once. His utterance is but one. In his Word he speaks his Son and the Holy Ghost and the whole of creatures, all of which are but one utterance in God. But, 'I heard two,' the prophet says. Meaning, I understood it to be God and creature. Yonder where God speaks it it is God; but here it is creature. People fondly think that God became man yonder. No; God was made man here as well as there, and he

was made man for one purpose only : to beget thee his one-begotten Son.

Yesterday I quoted from the *Paternoster* the words, ' thy will be done.' Better his will than mine. That I should do it, is what the *Paternoster* means. First, by being (oblivious or) asleep to things, ignoring time and images and creatures. Philosophers will tell you that being in deep sleep a man might pass a hundred years oblivious of creatures, time and images and yet aware of God at work within him. As the soul says in the Book of Love, ' I sleep, but my heart waketh.' So when all creatures are asleep in thee thou durst be awake to God's doings in thee.

' Labour in all things ' says our text, and this is open to three interpretations. It means, turn all to good account, or, see God in everything, for God is everywhere. St Augustine says, God created all things not that he might leave them and go on his own way : no, he is still in them. People imagine they have more if they have things plus God than if they have God without the things. They are mistaken. All things plus God amount to nothing more than God alone ; and he who fondly weens that if he has the Son and the Father with him he has more than if he had the Son without the Father, is mistaken too. The Father plus the Son is no more than the Son is by himself and the Son plus the Father is no more than the Father by himself. To find God in all things is a sign that he has begotten thee his only Son, no less.

Again, turn everything to good account, means, love God the same in poverty as wealth, hold him as dear in sickness as in health ; as dear in trials and in sufferings as in immunity from sufferings. The heavier to bear the lighter to bear : like two buckets, the heavier the one the lighter the other, and so the more one gets rid the easier the riddance. The God-lover parts with the world as cheerfully as with an egg. The more he gives up the easier it grows.

Thirdly, ' labour in all things ' means : where thou findest thyself about manifold things, at variance with pure and simple essence, let that be thy work : ' work in all things ' and ' fulfil thy destiny.' It also means, lift up thy head, and this is twofold in its implication. The first meaning is : part with all that is thine and appropriate God ; then God will be thine as he is his own ; he will be God to thee as he is God to his very self, no less. What is mine I get from no one. If I get it from another it is not mine but his from whom I got it. The other meaning is, dedicate all thy acts to God. Many people cannot understand this, and I am not surprised ; to know the meaning of it the soul must be in

great detachment and uplifted over all these things. May we attain to this perfection, So help us God. Amen.

LXVII[1]

THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE MOVED

Virtutes cælorum movebantur (*Luc.* 21_{26}). This is a gospel-saying of our Lord, and the translation runs, 'The powers of heaven shall be moved.' Heaven is suggestive of some mysterious or hidden thing, God being so mysteriously concealed by the light of his divine splendour that no man may by dint of his own intellect attain to the beatific vision of his godly countenance. As Job exclaims, 'Who can by searching find out the things in heaven?' As though to say, no one in the world. The sage laments this, crying, 'Alas! O Lord, thou art a hidden God!' According to St Augustine, 'God hides in the recesses of the soul, disguised in the workings of grace wherein he shows himself to the soul covertly, so that none may know except the soul wherein he is thus privily concealed.' And St Paul says, 'Everything, which is in the soul, is hidden.' The soul then is the godly heaven and ghostly where in unbroken stillness God does his perfect work. As God spake by the prophets, 'Behold, I create in you a new heaven.'

It is the stirring of the powers of these incarnate heavens by the light of God's glory shining on them which Christ refers to when he says, 'The powers of heaven are shaken.' These words betoken to us the good works of the soul whereto she is wont what time God being hid in her makes her the heaven of his incomprehensible divinity. For every act proceeds from power and power proceeds from essence. So from these words we learn three things about the noble nature of the soul. First, her transcendent being. (Thus he speaks of *heaven*.) Next, her powerful faculties. (Hence the word *powers*.) Thirdly, her fruitful operation. (Hence the word *moved*.)

Now to begin with let us note that if the soul has got a heavenly being she must possess three heavenly properties. First, the innate eternity of heaven. Secondly, its motion in a circle. Thirdly, its overflowing into creatures underneath. These three things I demonstrate as follows: The first, that heaven is eternal, I explain in this way. The heavens have an incorporeal, immaterial nature in corporeal guise. No outside semblance is admitted. Colour is excluded, and no variable force can ply therein, hence its state is one of fixed abiding. Then the circular motion of the

[1] See also Spamer's *Texte*, A. 6, for a longer version.

heavens is argued thus. Anything that travels in a circle comes back to its start; and anything that comes back to its start travels in a circle. Now the philosopher says the mover of the heavens is in the East where the sun rises. We see with our own eyes that every day the sun dawns in the East and sets into the West to rise again next day at the place where, the philosopher says, the mover resides. It returns each day to its start. Ergo, the sun goes round. This is not to be confused with the sun's own period of revolution. The starting-point of its own path is not reached in one day: it takes it a whole year, three hundred and sixty-five days, that is to say. Rather we must take this as referring to the heavens altogether, with the sun in their train. The sun doing yearly what they accomplish daily. Thirdly, the heavenly downpour into creatures I argue from the fact that everything subject to birth and decay is unstable and lacking in celestial power. As the philosopher observes in the book of *The Celestial Nature*, 'Heaven is to all inferior things the influx of being and of life.'

Now for the soul to be this ghostly heaven she must return to her eternal being, to the circular motion of her cause and to her highest nature streaming down into her lower powers. First and foremost let me say that as she goes it does behove the soul to turn to her eternal being and diligently note how by God's grace she is immortal in her nature which he has rendered meet to share in his eternal bliss. She is an incorporeal nature in corporeal guise, spirit not following body in its fleshly birth, so no extraneous semblance can invade her, provided she is ever on her guard against the fading of her own exemplar wherein she is reflecting and manifesting God in his own proper nature. Nor may she brook the entrance of any naughtiness to oust her from her heavenly perfection and cast her into suffering, for she suffers without suffering in the power of God whereby she is fortified in suffering. Withal no other power can ply in her; she is so secure in God who is immutable stability that neither death nor life nor depth nor height nor any creature can part her from his fixed and changeless deity. So with King David she may say, 'In cleaving to God lies the gift of immortal felicity.'

Secondly, the soul progresses in a circle, for she rises with the rising sun, in her eternal nature, to wit, in her heavenly Father's heart, where there is ever dawning the true Son, his self-begotten Son, the light and shine of his eternal sufficiency. And she returns into the Father's mind where she is spoken in celestial wise, as the prophet hath it, 'God fashioned the heavens in his understanding.' This intelligible heaven means the soul returned intact to God as to her source. For he speaks into her his eternal

Word, and confirms her in all heavenly perfection; as the prophet cries on becoming the heaven of the Deity, 'By God's Word are the heavens fixed and established.'

Thirdly, this spiritual heaven of the soul drips divine grace and consolation. Just as the angel-mover rolls the heavens round and gives them energy, furnishing the heavens with the power of his might for heaven to pass on and thus supply all things with their being and activity and life, even so God dispenses to the soul his godly power with all its grace, which wells up in the Father's heart, so giving her the means of growing vigorous and strong in his own proper motion wherein she gives her being and activity and life to all her lower powers, to the members of her body and to all their operations, till they, grown living in God's eyes, do bring forth fruit of life eternal. This was the draught the prophet craved when, mindful that the Holy Ghost was troubling the deep waters of his heart and that his highest power was receiving and conceiving the dearest power of divinity, Isaias cried, 'Drop dew, ye heavens from above,' meaning to say, pour into all my powers, all my members, all my works, the sweet celestial dew which ye have gotten into you from God.'

Further we must note how he has decked the natural heavens with seven planets, seven noble stars which are nearer to us than the rest. The first is Saturn, then comes Jupiter, then Mars and then the Sun; after that comes Venus and then Mercury and then the Moon. Now when the soul becomes a spiritual heaven our Lord will deck her with these same stars ghostly, as John saw in his apocalypse when he espied the King of Kings seated upon the throne of the majesty of God and having seven stars in his hand. Know that the first star, Saturn, is the purger; Jupiter, the second, the well-wisher; the third one, Mars, is him of wrath; the fourth, the Sun, the light-giver; the fifth one, Venus, is the lover; the sixth one, Mercury, the winner; the seventh is the Moon, the runner.

In the heaven of the soul Saturn becomes angelic purity, bringing as reward the vision of God, as our Lord says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' After him comes Jupiter, the gracious, whose reward is the possession of the earth; not the one we wear by way of body, nor that we tread on with our feet; but the one we are in eager search of: that earth which is flowing with the milk of humanity and the honey of divinity. It is of this our Lord declares, 'Blessed are the meek in heart for they shall inherit the earth.' Next follows Mars, of grim, determined nature and passionate suffering for God, bringing reward of the kingdom of heaven, as our Lord says, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for God's sake for the heavenly

kingdom is theirs.' And after him the sun of light bringing as its guerdon to the soul, with knowledge of the truth the habit of right-doing and of giving unto everyone his own; and she being God's by creation and adoption does therefore give herself to God withal. According to the words of our Lord, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.' Then comes Venus, the lover, bringing reward of union with God; as our Lord said, 'He that loveth me is beloved of my Father; such come unto him and abide with him.' From her, too, comes reward of consolation, since love sets the loving heart lamenting and mourning for her love. As our Lord says, 'Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.' After her comes Mercury, the winner, directly the soul forgoes everything for God, bearing as his prize the palm of deity, including the kingdom of heaven. According to the words of our Lord, 'Blessed are the spiritual poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Last comes the Moon, the runner, with her meed of happiness attained, as St Paul says, 'So run that ye may obtain.' Now the soul attains God best by running to him with a tranquil heart, for his abode is in peace. Our God chooses peace for his children, and his child is heir to his eternal bliss, as our Lord says, 'Blessed are the peaceful for they shall be called the children of God.'

Beyond these planetary stars there is the heaven where the fixed stars are which shine by night, the signals of the works wrought by the soul. In the night of the shadow of this world these shine before men, according to the words of our Lord, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The other stars all get their light from the radiance of the sun. Venus as well, the love-star, which shines brightest of them all. Accordingly, the works we do are pregnant most with power and brightest light when we have wholly gotten us the nature of the amiable Venus, star of love, whose nature is receptive to the sunshine of the true and intelligible Deity.

LXVIII[1]

THE POWERS OF THE SOUL

Igitur perfecti sunt cœli et terra et omnis ornatus eorum (*Gen.* 2_1). 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the adornment of them.' Even so the heavens of the inner man are finished and all the ornaments thereof. In the passage where Christ speaks of 'the powers,' we construe these to mean the sovran powers of the soul. For the soul has got three powers in her spiritual mind

[1] No. 67 (2) in Pfeiffer's text.

which are heavenly inasmuch as they are capable of doing heavenly work, for every heavenly power is of the breath of the mouth of our God.

The first power receives, the second sees, the third loves. What time the soul is occupied in entertaining God, in self-recollection and intellectual contemplation, the love of her will transports her right into God. Then occurs that movement of the heavens, in the act of fecundation, which is latent in eternity. For the end of all motion is rest. As saith Isaiah the prophet, ' The heavens are moved and the earth withal and after the motion comes rest.' Now there is not perfect rest in intellectual vision, for in mental operations there is a certain motion of external things towards the soul, in virtue of which movement the forms of these same things are drawn into and pictured in the soul, starting a psychic motion in the *isness* of the soul and the real being of the things appearing in the picture; and this motion extends to the will which is not at rest any more.

Hence we see that in the starry heavens, the revolving heavens, God is none other than the mover, the starter, the source of energy whence the heavens get their power and their spin. And so too in this life he is present in the soul as the mover of our free will towards himself and towards good works, he being the fount of grace, which, from his godly heart, flows down into the soul.

Beyond this heaven there is the motionless heaven, and this firmament is the abode of the blest. In this heaven God is in all his felicity, engaged in the personal act of his eternal divinity. For the Father goes on begetting his Son in himself without ceasing, and Father and Son breathe forth with equal power their holy Breath, both Son and Holy Ghost abiding with the Father in the essence, and in the vision of this Trinity of Persons lies the whole happiness of creatures which are able to participate in his divine felicity. So the soul, having conquered the multiple heavens and possessed herself of their mysterious power, is plunged into the unity of the motionless heaven, called fire or the empyrean, not because it is burning but because it is enlightening, all who are in this heaven being ablaze with the cherubic light of divine love. The soul becomes the heavenly habitation of the eternal Deity, and he performs his godly work in her, whence she receives the nectar which is denied to such as have not reached this fiery celestial mind. For her heavenly Sire begets in her his Son whom she lures out of his Father's heart, and Father and Son breathe into her their holy Breath, the Son never leaving his Father's heart but proceeding forth from his Father in such fashion that he ever abides in his Father's heart. Thus the Father dwells in the soul; he clasps the soul to his breast, and in this embrace of

the Father she conceives within her his Son as a proceeding Person and at the same time is aware of his presence with the Father in his essence. For thus saith the Father, 'I will lead her into the wilderness, into the solitude, and will speak into her heart.' His leading her into the desert, into the solitude, means making her void, deserted of creatures; he empties her of corruptible things and says all he can to her heart. He can speak but one word, and that Word is eternal: it is his only-begotten Son. That is the Word he speaks to the soul, giving birth to his Son in her, and in this birth the Father and Son inspire her with their Holy Ghost which teaches her all things.

Thus the soul gets all things from the Father and has gotten all things in the Son and knows all things in the Holy Ghost and so, possessed of all things, she is resting in God without end.

LXIX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND

Scitate, quia prope est regnum dei (*Luc.* 21_{31}). Our Lord says, The kingdom of God is at hand. Yes, the kingdom of God is within us, and according to St Paul our salvation is nearer than we think. In what sense is the kingdom of God near at hand? Let us consider this carefully. Supposing I were king all unbeknowest to me, then I should be no king. But suppose I have the firm conviction that I am the king and everyone maintains and insists upon it with me and I know for certain that all the world is of the same opinion, in that case I am king and all the king's treasure is mine. Failing any one of these three things I can be no king. Even so our happiness depends on our knowledge, our awareness of the sovran good, which is God himself. I have one power in my soul fully sensible of God. I am as certain as I live that nothing is so close to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to my own self; my life depends upon God's being near me, present in me. So is he also in a stone, a log of wood, only they do not know it. If the wood knew of God and realized his nearness like the highest angel does, then the log would be as blessed as the chief of all the angels. Man is more happy than a log of wood in that he knows and is aware of God, how near at hand God is. The better he knows it the happier he is and the worse he knows it the more unhappy he is. He is not happy because of God's being in him and so near him or because of having God, but because he is aware of God, of his nearness to him; because he is God-knowing and God-loving, and such an one knows that God's kingdom is at hand.

Thinking upon God's kingdom, often I am dumbfounded at its grandeur; for God's kingdom is God's self in all his fullness. God's kingdom is no little thing: all imaginable worlds God might create, these make not up his kingdom. The soul God's kingdom dawns in, who is conscious of God's fullness, her none durst counsel nor instruct: she is by it instructed and assured of life eternal. He who knows, who is aware, how near God's kingdom is can say with Jacob, God is in this place and I knew it not.

God is just as near in creatures. The wise man says, God has spread his nets and lines all over creatures, and we can find and know him in any one of them if only we will look.

A philosopher says, 'That man knows God aright who is equally aware of him in all things'; and, 'To serve God in fear is good; to serve him in love is better, but he who is apt to behold love in fear does best of all.' A life of rest and peace in God is good; a life of pain in patience is still better; but to have peace in a life of pain is best of all. One may go in the fields and say one's prayers and be conscious of God or go to church and be conscious of God; if we are more conscious of God by being in a quiet place, that comes of our own imperfection and is not due to God, for God is the same in all things and all places and just as ready to vouchsafe himself so far as in him lies; and that man knows God aright who ever finds him the same.

St Bernard says, 'Why does my eye see sky, and not my foot? Because my eye is like the sky, more than my foot.' For my soul to see God then, she must be heavenly. What makes the soul alive to God in her, aware how close to her he is? I answer: Heaven permits no alien intrusion, no mortal lack can penetrate therein to do it outrage. And the soul that knows God is so firmly established in God that nothing can reach her, not hope nor fear nor joy nor grief nor good nor ill nor nothing that would bring her down to earth.

Heaven is at all points equidistant from the earth. And likewise it behoves the soul to be equally remote from every earthly thing and no nearer to one than to another but equable in joy, in grief, in having and in wanting; whatever it be she must be dead, dispassionate, superior to it. Heaven is clear and unsullied in its brightness, free from any taint of time and place. No corporal thing finds room therein. Not itself in time, incredible in swiftness is its revolution, its actual course being timeless though from its course comes time. Nothing hinders the soul from knowing God so much as time and place. Time and place are fractions, God is an integer. So if the soul knows God at all she must know him above time and space, for God is neither this nor that as these manifold things are: God is one.

If the soul would see God she must not look at anything in time. While the soul is regarding time and place or any such idea she can never recognise God. Before the eye can see colour it has to be rid of all colour. Before the soul can see God it must have nothing in common with naught. The seer of God knows that creatures are naught. Comparing one with another, creature looks fair and is aught, but compare it with God, it is naught.

Further I declare : any soul that sees God must have forgotten herself and have lost her own self ; while she sees and remembers herself she nor sees nor is conscious of God. But when for God's sake she loses herself and abandons all things then in God does she re-find herself, for knowing God she is knowing herself and all things (which she rid herself of) in God in perfection. To know the sovran good and the eternal goodness, really, I must know them in the good itself, not in partial goodness. To know real being I must know it as subsisting in itself, that is, in God, not parcelled out in creatures.

In God alone exists the whole of godhood. Not in one man exists the whole of manhood, for in a single man exists not all mankind. But in God the soul finds perfect manhood and all things in their prime, for she knows them in their essential nature. The dweller in a richly furnished house must know far more about it than another person who, though full of information, has never been within. And by this same token I am as certain as I live, and as God lives, that the soul who knows God knows him above time and place. In this God-conscious state the soul perceives how near God's kingdom is, namely, God in all his fullness. There is much discussion among doctors at the School as to the possibility of the soul knowing God. Not by reason of his harshness does God exact so much from man but out of his great kindness, wanting the soul to be more capacious, big enough to hold the largesse he is anxious to bestow.

Let no one deem it difficult to arrive at this however hard may seem, and be, indeed, to start with, the parting from and dying to all things. Having once got into it no life is more easy, more delightful or more lovely. God is so very careful to be always with a man to guide him to himself in case of his taking the wrong way. No man ever wanted anything so much as God wants to make the soul aware of him. God is ever ready, but we are so unready. God is near to us, but we are far from him. God is in, we are out ; God is at home, we are strangers. The prophet says, ' God leads the just by a narrow path to the high road out into the open,' that is, to the true freedom of the spirit become one spirit with God. Ours to follow his lead and let him bring us to himself. So help us God. Amen.

LXX

THIS IS A SERMON ABOUT OUR LORD'S BODY

This is a sermon on our Lord's body by Brother Eckhart. He says that the bread of our Lord's body has many names, but three special ones are given it in holy writ. In the first place it is called the heavenly bread, in the second it is called the bread of angels, and thirdly the bread of lamentation. And whoso would worthily receive this bread of our Lord's body must have these three things. First, none can enjoy the heavenly bread who is not a heavenly man. This means that as the heavens with the sun and moon and the entire system are above all earthly, temporal things, so man in his desires, his senses and his thoughts must be lifted up to celestial things. Secondly, no man can enjoy the bread of heaven except he be an angelic man, for no creature was ever so perfect as an angel. This man must be at all times perfectly pure in heart and body. Thirdly, it is called the bread of lamentation ; this no man enjoys except he be a man of sorrow, one, that is to say, who pondering our Lord's martyrdom shall rue the treatment meted out to our Lord on earth. Whoso has not this rue shall not enjoy the bread of sorrow. So, then, a man must have three things before he can approach this bread. First, having gotten to the excellent condition of knowing good and ill, he must choose the good and worthy and reject the foul and evil. Next, with his heart divorced from worldly loves, this man must go in godly love and all godly things. Thirdly, he must order all his activities.

LXXI[1]

2

BOËTHIUS SAYS: HE WHO WANTS TO SEE TRUE

Boëthius says, ' He who wants to see true in this light I speak of let him relinquish four things,' which are set down. He must relinquish the joys of the world and care and want and fear ; while these are in thee it is dark and clouded therein. St Paul says God dwells in light inaccessible. Anything approaching this light the light consumes and turns to its own divine nature, even as I said of the divine essence : what is taken into the essence is changed into essence. Speaking of understanding : as it is characteristic of God to subsist unmoved in his pure and virgin essence, his own being, so is this property imputed to understanding, which is so noble as to be self-subsistent.

[1] For No. 71 (1) see Jostes, No. 15, of which it forms a part.

I have told how understanding has to break through the image of the Son ; as he himself declares, ' I am the light of the world ; no man cometh to the Father but through me.' As the wise man explains in the Book of Wisdom, when the soul is borne into God by his divine wisdom, she is clarified and sublimed in light and in grace, all that is foreign to the soul being detached and shelled away together with a portion of herself. Further, I related how the soul, now throughly purged of soul accretions, is carried up and flows back into the Son as pure as she flowed out in him. The Father created the soul in the Son, so if we are ever to get into the ground of God, into his innermost heart, we must take the lowest place in our own ground, in our own innermost self, in abject lowliness. When the soul enters into her ground, into the innermost recesses of her being, divine power suddenly pours into her, producing much activity, both manifest and secret, and the soul grows big and high in favour with God. This is and must be in the soul who, rightly disposed in the ground of humility, ascends, borne aloft in the divine power : she never stops until she gets right into God and coming to absolute rest in him, abides wholly within without looking out, subsistent in his pure essence ; for even therein is the soul. God is pure being. The philosopher says that nothing at all can get into God, who is pure being, but what is also pure being. Ergo, the soul is pure being who has gotten therein, soaring right up into God. Amen.

LXXII [1]

THE PROPHET SAYS : LORD BE MERCIFUL

The prophet said, ' Lord be merciful to the people that is in thee.' The Lord replied, ' All that enter in will I make whole and love much.'

I take the words of the Pharisee who besought our Lord to dine with him and our Lord's injunction to the woman, *vade in pace* ! It is good to pass from restlessness to calm : praiseworthy but imperfect. ' Go in peace,' be not disquieted : God implies that we ought to enter into peace and continue in peace and end in peace. God said, ' In me ye have peace.' So far in God so far in peace. Is aught in God, it is in peace ; is aught out of God, it is without peace. St John says, ' Whatever is born of God overcometh the world.' What is born of God seeks peace and ensues it. He that pursues the even tenor of his way and is at peace is a heavenly man. Heaven constantly rotates, in its motion seeking rest.

[1] See also Jostes, No. 10.

The Pharisee besought our Lord that he would dine with him. The food a man eats is changed in him into his body, like the body by the soul. Body and soul are one in being, not in act, thus my soul is united with my eye in one mode, that of seeing. Even so the food a man consumes mingles with his nature as regards its essence but not its activity; and the great atonement we are destined to with God shall be of essence not of operation. Hence the Pharisee's request that God would eat with him.

Pharisee signifies a solitary, one who knows no end to detachment of soul. The more noble the powers the more they liberate. Some powers are far higher than the body and sufficiently aloof to shell off and detach completely. As the philosopher well says, What once moves mortal things never enters into them. Again, by being free and unattached the unlettered man may in love and longing receive wisdom and impart it. And thirdly, having no end means having no finality, no ultimate security until one is at rest and all unwitting of disquiet: until the soul-powers being fixed on God are wholly unattached. As the prophet cries, 'Lord be merciful to the people that are in thee.'

One master says, 'Of all the exalted works God has ever wrought in creatures mercy is the most familiar and the most mysterious, his work in the angels not excepted.' In it the work of mercy is exalted to mercy as it is in itself and as it is in God. Of God's activity the first outcome is mercy; not in the sense of his forgiving man's sins nor of one man's forgiving another; his highest work is mercy in the sense that he initiates the soul into the highest and most perfect thing she can conceive in this world. In his bottomless ocean God is productive of mercy.

The prophet said, 'Lord be merciful to the people that is in thee.' What people is in God? St John says, 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.' St John says, 'Love unites, love initiates into God.' Haply it is accessory. Love does not unite, not in any wise. Satisfaction (or, enough) is not what holds together, binds together. Love unites in act and not in essence. The best authorities aver that intellect strips everything off and grasps God bare as pure being in itself. Intellect penetrates goodness and truth, and, lighting on virgin essence, it seizes God in the abstract as being without name. Neither knowledge nor love unites aught. Love takes God only as being good and God escapes from name. Good, love goes no further than that. Love takes God under a veil, under a garment. Not so understanding: understanding takes God as he is known in itself; it can never comprehend him in the sea of his own unfathomable nature. Above both these perceptions is mercy: God energises as mercy at the summit and perfection of his activity.

A philosopher says, There is something in the soul, intimate, mysterious, far higher than the soul herself, whence emanate her powers of intellect and will. St Augustine says: Just as that is ineffable out of which the Son leaps from the Father in the first procession, so there exists some occult thing behind the first procession of intellect and will. According to the philosopher who is our chief authority upon the soul, no human wisdom ever can attain to what the soul is. That requires supernatural wisdom. What the powers of the soul issue from into act, we do not know: about it haply we do know a little, but what the soul is in her ground no man knows. Any knowledge thereof that may be permitted to us must be supernatural; it must be by grace: God's agent of mercy.

LXXIII

ST BENEDICT'S DAY

Dilectus deo et hominibus etc. (*Eccl.* 45_1). In this passage from the Book of Wisdom the wise man speaks of (Moses), 'the beloved of God and men, whose memory is in benediction. God made him like the saints in glory.' And this may well be said of the saint whose festival we keep to-day. His name is Benedictus, blessed, so that to him are especially appropriate the words used here, *cujus memoria in benedictione est, i.e.* whose memory is in benediction, the more so as of him also we read that a glory was revealed to him wherein he saw the whole world gathered up as it were into a ball, and our text says, 'God made him like the saints in glory.'

As to this glory. St Gregory says that to a soul who is in this glory all things seem small and narrow. The natural light that God has poured into the soul is so splendid and so strong that God's bodily creation is all poor and meagre to it. This light is more glorious than any corporal thing God ever made, withal the meanest, vilest corporal thing illumined by this light, which is intelligence, becomes exalted above mortal things. It is clearer and brighter than the sun and purifies things from both time and matter. This light is so far-flung it vaults the boundaries of space. Wider than space, it transcends the great and good as God transcends wisdom and goodness; for God is not either wisdom or good, but from God come wisdom and goodness. Intellect comes not of wisdom, nor intellect is not the outcome of truth nor is not gotten thereof as will is of goodness. Will wants what is good and is engendered thereby and (truth) is the issue of intellect not intellect of the truth. This light which flows out of the intellect is intelligence, which is like an outburst, an outflow

or a stream as compared to what intellect is in itself. And this outburst is as far removed therefrom as heaven is from earth.

There is another light, the light of grace, compared to which this natural light illumines a mere pin-point of the earth, nay rather a mere pin-point compared with the whole heavens which are incredibly more vast than all the earth. God's presence in the soul by grace is instinct with more light than any intellect can give: the light of intellect is but a drop in the ocean of this light, nay less a thousandfold. Hence to the soul who is in God's grace all things, and whatever her mind can grasp, will appear small and mean.

I was asked the reason why virtuous folk who are in the good graces of God are so zealous to serve him. I said it was because they had tasted God, and it were strange indeed if, once tasting and enjoying God, the soul could stomach aught beside. As the saint hath it, Once the soul tries God she finds the things that are not God repugnant and distasteful.

Take the wise man's words in another sense: 'Beloved of God and men.' The verb *is* does not appear. He does not say: he is beloved of God and men, for he is not thinking of his changing and unstable temporal nature which the essence so far transcends. Essence is all-embracing and withal too transcendent ever to be touched by anything created. They that fondly think to have some knowledge of it know nothing whatsoever. As St Dionysius says, anything we know that we are able to impart or that we can define, that is not God; for in God is neither this nor that which we can abstract nor has he limitation. In him there is only one thing and that is himself. Hence for theologians there is the burning question: how comes this motionless, this intangible, solitary essence to be common to the soul, to be within the purview of the soul? and they are greatly exercised as to how the soul receives it. I can only say that his divinity consists in the communication of himself to whatever is receptive of his goodness, and did he not communicate himself he would not be God.

The soul God loves and to whom he does communicate himself must be so wholly free from time and from all taint of creature that God in her smacks only of himself. 'In the middle of the night, when all things were asleep,' the Scriptures say, 'thy word, O Lord, came down from thy royal throne.' 'In the night' means when no creature peers into, appears in, the soul, and it is in this quiet, this inarticulateness of the soul that the word is spoken in her intellectual nature. This word is that of her own understanding: the expression of the Word as it is and abides in the intellect.

Often I feel afraid, in discoursing about God, at how utterly

detached the soul must be to attain to union with him. We durst not deem this unattainable: nothing is unattainable to the soul that possesses God's grace. To none were things ever more easy to leave: to the soul that has gotten God's grace things are all (easy) to eschew. Further I say, none ever had pleasanter task to perform: to the soul with God's grace all things are (pleasant) to leave because creature can cause her no pain. St Paul says, 'I am persuaded that no creature can separate us from God; not fate nor life nor death.'

Look you. Nowhere is God so really God as in the soul. In every creature is somewhat of God, but in the soul God is divine, for she is his rest. According to one master, God loves nothing but himself: all his love is lavished on himself. Marry, a fool were he only to take a penny who at one stroke could seize an hundred pounds! God's love in us is the blossoming forth of the Holy Ghost. One word more of this: God loves nothing in us but the good he does in us himself. In the words of the saint, 'Nothing is crowned by God excepting his own work that is wrought by him in us.' Let no one be affrighted at my saying that God loves none beside himself; it is all to our advantage, for therein he has in view our highest happiness. He purposes to lure us to himself, to get us purged and take us to himself, so that with himself he may love himself in us and us in him. So he must needs, so far as our love goes, attract us to himself by every means he can, pleasant or disagreeable. God, despite himself, is ever hanging over us some bait to lure us into him. I never give God thanks for loving me, because he cannot help it; whether he would or no it is his nature to. What I do thank him for is for not being able of his goodness to leave off loving me. To know ourselves, to be installed in God, this is not hard, seeing that God himself must be working in us; for it is godly work, man acquiescing and making no resistance: he is passive while allowing God to act in him. Let us, waiting upon God, enable him to take us into him, so that becoming one with him he may be able to love us with himself. So help us God. Amen.

LXXIV

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

Convescens præcepit eis ab Jerosolymis ne discederent etc. (*Act.* 1_4). This passage which I have quoted in Latin comes in the Mass for to-day. St Luke records how our Lord being about to depart to heaven was in company with his disciples whom he 'commanded that they should not leave Jerusalem but should wait for the

promise of the Father which they had heard from his mouth for they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.'

He speaks of the promise or pledge of the Father. To us as well was given this pledge of baptism in the Holy Ghost and of being received thereby to dwell above time in eternity. Not in the things of time is the Holy Ghost bestowed. When a man turns from temporal things and goes into himself he notices a heavenly light, a light that comes from heaven. Though heaven-descended it is under heaven. There is no satisfaction in this light, for it is mortal, they say that it is matter. Now iron, which by nature falls, will rise, against its nature, and hang suspended to a loadstone in virtue of the master-force the stone receives from heaven. Wherever the stone turns there the iron goes with it. Even so the mind, unsatisfied with this infernal light, will scale the firmament and search the heavens to find the breath that spins them, the heavens by their revolution causing all things on earth to grow and flourish. Its spirit never rests content until it pierces to the coil, into the primal origin where the breath has its source. This spirit knows no time nor number : number does not exist apart from the malady of time. Other root has none save in eternity, where there is no number except one. This spirit, transcending number, breaks through multiplicity and is transfixed by God, and by the fact of his piercing me I pierce him in return : God leads this spirit into the desert, into the solitude of its own self, where it is simply one and is welling up in itself. This spirit has no why, for if it had a why the unity would also have its why. This spirit is in unity and freedom.

Doctors declare this will is free in the sense that none can bind it excepting God alone. God does not bind the will, he sets it free, free to choose naught but God himself, and this is real freedom. For the spirit to be incapable of willing aught other than God's will is not its bondage but its true liberation. Some people say, If I have God and the love of God then I am at liberty to follow my own will. They labour under a mistake. So long as thou art capable of anything against the will of God and against his law thou hast no love of God though thou cozen the world that thou hast it. One who is in God's will and in God's love is fain to do the things God likes and leave undone the things God hates, and he can no more leave undone a thing that God wants done than he can do a thing that God abhors ; just like a man whose legs are tied together, he cannot stray and neither can he err who is in the will of God. Someone once said, 'God may command me to do evil and shun virtue, but I am incapable of sin.' No one loves virtue without being virtue. He who abandons himself and everything, who seeks not his own in any wise but does all he does

for love and without why, that man being dead to all the world is alive in God and God in him.

Here someone may object, It is all very well for you to tell us these things, but we ourselves know nothing of them.—That I also rue. This knowledge is so noble and so common, it is not to be purchased for a farthing or a penny. A just mind and a free will, have but these, and it is thine. To abandon all things on this lower plane where they exist in mortal guise is to recapture them in God where they are reality. Everything that is dead here is life yonder and all that is dense matter here is spirit there in God. If you pour fresh water into a clean basin and, all being clear and bright, stand it in a quiet place, then, holding your face over it you see it at the bottom as it really is. That is because the water is free from impurity and still. It is the same with people who in a state of freedom and interior calm envisage God in peace and quiet, and when they are able to see him just as well in turmoil and disquiet there is perfect equanimity; but if a man enjoys him less in trouble and unrest, that argues him not equable (unjust). St Augustine says, 'When the days are weary and the time is long a man should turn to God, where no such thing as long exists and things are all at rest.' The lover of justice is possessed with justice, and he is this virtue.

Our Lord said, 'I have called you not servants, I have called you friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth.' And so may my friend know something that I ignore, yet have no mind to tell me. But our Lord says, 'All that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' I marvel how some priests, and these with pretensions to eminence and learning, allow themselves to be misled into interpreting these words to mean that he shows us of the path only the bare minimum needful to our happiness. That is not what I hold; there is no truth in it. Why was God born man? That I might be born God himself. God died that I might die to the whole world and all created things. And it is in this sense that we must understand the saying of our Lord, 'All that I have heard of my Father I have revealed unto you.' What does the Son hear of his Father? The Father can only beget; the Son can only be gotten. All the Father has and that he is, the whole basis of God's essence and God's nature, he brings forth once for all in his one-begotten Son. This the Son hears from his Father, this he makes known unto us, we being this same Son. All the Son has he has from his Father: essence and nature, we are this only Son. No one has the Holy Ghost except he be the only Son. Father and Son expire their holy Breath, and once this sacred breath inspires a man it remains in him, for he is essential and pneumatic.

True, thou mayst receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, the likeness of the Holy Ghost, but it abides not with thee ; it is impermanent. Just as a man may blush for shame, or blench, it is an accident and passes. But one by nature fair and ruddy is so always. So with this man, as being the only Son his holy Breath is of the nature of him. As it is written in the Book of Wisdom, 'This day have I begotten thee in the reflection of my eternal light, in the fullness of the Godhead and the glory of all saints.' He is begetting him now, to-day. There is childbed in the Godhead, there are they baptized in the Holy Ghost according to the promise of the Father. 'After these days which are not many,' or a few, then comes the 'fullness of the Godhead,' where there is neither day nor night ; where things a thousand leagues away are as near me as the ground whereon I stand : that is the fulfilment, the full enjoyment of Godhood ; that is oneness. While the soul sees any difference she is unjust ; as long as aught looks out, looks in, there is no unanimity. Mary Magdalene sought our Lord within the tomb ; seeking one dead man she found two living angels, but still was unconsoled. Said the angel, 'Why art thou cast down ? Whom seekest thou, woman ? ' As though to say, 'Thou dost seek one dead and hast found two living.' Whereto she might have answered, 'That is the burden of my discontent, that I find two where I sought one alone.'

While anything created can make a clear impression on the soul she is disconsolate. I say, as I have often said before, so far as the soul's created nature goes there is no such thing as truth. I declare that there is something beyond the soul's created nature. But certain priests cannot understand how there can be anything so nearly kin to God, so much the same as he is. It has naught in common with naught. Anything made or created is naught, but this is alien and remote from the made and the created. It is something self-contained, taking nothing from outside. Our Lord departed to heaven, beyond all light, beyond all understanding, beyond all human ken. He who is thus translated beyond light of any kind dwells in the unity. As St Paul says, 'God dwells in the light that no man can approach unto,' which is in itself the perfect one. A man then must be dead, must be dead indeed, devoid of any being of his own, wholly without likeness, like to none, to be really Godlike. For it is God's character, his nature, to be peerless, incomparable. May we be the same in the oneness of God himself. So help us God. Amen.

LXXV [1]

ASCENSION DAY

Expedit vobis etc. vado parare vobis locum etc. (*Joh.* 16_7, 14_2). When he was about to depart from this world to his heavenly Father, Christ said to his disciples, ' It is expedient for you, it is for your good, that I should go, for while I am with you the Holy Ghost the Comforter will not come unto you.' With these words our Lord consoled his disciples knowing full well that they were troubled because he had warned them of his ascension. Our Lord will not suffer his lovers to be troubled, for fear is painful. And St John says, ' Love casteth out fear.' Love is incompatible with fear and pain, for the waxing of love is the waning of fear, and when love is perfect all fear is gone. But at the beginning of the virtuous life fear is of use to man, providing him a thoroughfare for love. As the bodkin or the awl makes a passage for the thread and the shoe is stitched with thread, not with the iron ; and as the bristle's part towards the thread is to put it in as fastening while the bristle is withdrawn ; so, to begin with, fear makes room for love and love binds to God, whereas fear passes out.

Leaving now this argument we turn to the words of my Latin quotation, the words of our Lord, ' I go to prepare a place for you.' Here we notice two things taught and proved by our Lord in his ascension. The first one is that the soul is by nature heir to heaven. God is her lawful heritage, for no one generates the soul but God. God made her without any intervention. Some doctors will maintain, perhaps, that the divine light pouring into the angels, the whole creaturely idea that God reflects into the angels before it is exemplified in divers creatures, that this divine light, this image in the angels, is what makes the soul. Not so. The soul does not permit of any meddling, any interference in God's activity towards her, but fresh and pure as this flows out of God in one unbroken stream, so does the soul proceed from God. Most privily has God embarked and launched forth the soul, so that no one knows for certain what she is. One philosopher calls her a light, and that is well said ; for like the light streaming out of the sun and shining into all creatures so is the soul sent straight from God. St Augustine says, Since the soul is emitted from God she is nowhere at rest except in God. Another master says she is a spirit, and this is true in a certain sense ; God is a spirit, and the soul is made like to God, so she may well be called spirit, being to God as spirit to spirit. A third master dubs her a fire, speaking the truth in symbol, for fire is most lofty in its nature,

[1] See also Wackernagel, No. 65.

most theurgic in its operation, and it never rests until it licks the heavens. It envelops all the elements for being much wider and higher than the air, or than water or the earth, it must be surrounding all the rest. It comes next of all to heaven and revolves therewith. The air goes with it, partially, because of being dense, while water, which is altogether grosser, is unable to keep pace and runs behind. The soul is called a fire because, in her desire, she does keep pace with God, like fire with the heavens, for the soul cannot rest except in God. Some souls which are rather dense follow haltingly, as air lags after fire. And some, again, being downright gross, are, like water, earth-bound and incapable of keeping up with God but run behind; for seeing or hearing something good will stir them with desire to be good, so they do follow after; like water drifting to and fro without a change of level, so are these people moved while abiding of the same mind as before. A fourth doctor calls her a spark of God's celestial nature, and this jumps with our theory of her heavenly origin. Where one clod falls, there, generally speaking, all earth would fall as well; a single clod reveals the ground to be its resting-place. And whither one spark flies to from the fire, that place is revealed as the resting-place of fire.

Now we have sent one spark to heaven, the soul to wit of our Lord Jesus Christ, which shows the common resting-place of souls is nowhere but in heaven; and herein we have proof of the entire soul being heavenly. The body, on the other hand, is made of the four elements, so its habitat is naturally earth. But the soul is in intimate union with the body, and they must ever stay together despite that the body is of earth and the soul a denizen of heaven. God found a wise solution of this problem, himself becoming man and going in his proper power to heaven, so that in him we have already sent one clod of earth to heaven. And the whole earth likewise must belong to heaven, for Christ's resting-place is nowhere but in union with his Father; and as God is three in Person so is he one in nature, they having one being and one life. Thus our Lord Christ shows us that our being and our life are eternal in divine union.

The second thing our Lord has taught and proved by his ascension is how we must prepare ourselves to follow after him in pursuance of his words, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' Just as, on those four grounds, the soul is called light, spirit, fire or a spark of God's celestial nature, even so man is lifted up or gotten ready also by four things finely symbolised of old in the prophet Moses, of whom we read that he gathered his flock together and drove it into the wilderness, 'into the backside of the desert,' and there upon the mount of God he saw a bush burning but unconsumed.

Moses wished to turn aside and see this wonder, the burning bush which would not burn away. But the Lord called to him out of the bush, and said, 'Draw not nigh; put off thy shoes,' under which figure we are taught four precious lessons.

First, in the name Moses, for Moses being interpreted means, one taken from the water. So shall a man be rescued from instability, from out the tempests of this world.

Next, that man's animal passions and desires must all be herded up into the highest power of his soul. Unless thé soul is gathered up and lifted out of created things the Holy Ghost cannot enter in nor energise in her. All divine work done by God is wrought by him in spirit, above time and place, for mortal things are fatal to the flow of God. Divine light shed on spiritual creature will engender life, but if it falls on mortal things it fades, either dimmed or extinguished altogether. That is why our Lord declared, 'It is expedient for you, it is for your good, that I should go away.' For his disciples loved him as a man and mortal. Now there can be no doubt that our Lord was nobler than anything God ever made. If he then was a hindrance to his followers it is unquestionably true that other things we love, which are inferior to God, will hinder us much more. Ergo, the soul must transcend the world if she wants God to ply his godly work in her. And St Augustine says explicitly, we can transcend the world in love and knowledge, and that lacking love and knowledge we are nothing, *i.e.* in the world.

In the third place we learn, that man can see and know God's work, but that while in this body he must needs stop short of actual attainment, just as Moses saw the burning bush but could not go right up to it; he wanted to, however: a case of the love which does not consume the body and has no spiritual potency.

Fourthly, putting off the shoes signifies the freeing of the soul's desire, its withdrawal from all mortal and perishable things. To this and things still higher, O God help us. Amen.

LXXVI

ASCENSION DAY SERMONS

1

Expedit vobis ut ego vordam etc. (*Joh.* 16_7). We read in the gospel how our Lord said to his disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away ye cannot receive the Holy Ghost.' And this by reason of three hindrances which beset three kinds of people. First, sinners who let creatures hinder them, using them

ungodly for their pleasure. These people are wandering in God's way, for creatures are a way of God. Hence St Augustine's dictum, 'Cursed be they that wander in the way of God.' I will say no more of these; following their animal passions they are divorced from God. Also, there are good people who are over-busy with their material wants and take too much pleasure in externals. Concerning them God said, 'He that loveth his soul shall lose it' (loveth carnally, that is: over-fondness, for it will lose a man his soul) 'and he that hateth his soul shall keep it unto life eternal.' Meaning those that follow not their inordinate pleasures and desires.

A second hindrance blocks the path of other good and truly pious people. Namely, the seven sacraments. *Sacramentum* means a sign. That man never gets to the underlying truth who stops at the enjoyment of its symbol; and the seven sacraments all point us to the same reality. Marriage (for example) is a symbol of divine and human nature and also of the union of the soul with God. To rest in the illusion means delay in the attainment of real oneness. Ye durst not think of marriage as the mating of a man and a woman with each other for the indulgence of their outward passions and for the leading of a life of pleasure. That is not real marriage. Marriage means obedience to the marriage rule with its seven times and its works of mercy. Again, some pious souls are hampered with scrupulosity in the matter of repentance and confession; they boggle at the symbol and neglect the thing itself. Our Lord says of these, 'He that has bathed needs but to wash his feet.' Which is as good as saying, Once purged by heartfelt rue and throughly shriven, a man needs not to re-confess old sins though he must 'wash his feet,' that is, his will and conscience: them let him cleanse by confessing daily faults.

Also, some of the devout hinder themselves by over-occupation, outwardly, with the blessed sacrament of God's body, to the detriment of their receiving it; these cultivate the rites at the cost of the reality, for the thing itself is inside not in its outward show. Wherefore they receive not God's body worthily. The sacraments all point us to the one and only truth, so we ought not to dally with the symbols but penetrate to the actuality. Those who follow the spirit of God's truth will worship him in spirit and in truth. So said Christ himself to the woman drawing at the well at Samaria when she asked him where to pray, whether on the mountains where her fathers used to pray or where the Jews then worshipped. Quoth our Lord, 'The hour cometh and is now, when true worshippers shall worship not only on the mountains and in the Temple but in spirit, in the place of God.' The moral of

which is that we ought to pray to God not only on the hill-tops and in churches, but we ought always to be praying, at all times and everywhere. St Paul says, 'Rejoice evermore; in everything give thanks; pray without ceasing.' Even so pray they whose every deed is done like-mindedly for the love of God; who, careless of their personal pleasure, bow themselves humbly before God and leave him alone to act. The prayer of the lips was enjoined by holy Christendom for the recalling of the soul from her outward senses wherein she dissipates herself in a multiplicity of perishable things. Being recollected thence into her highest power (*i.e.* knowledge and memory and will) she is turned to spirit, and when the spirit is joined to God in perfect unity of will, it is turned to God. Then, not till then, he is in true prayer, when he has reached the goal of his creation; for we were created solely to be God, and that is the reason why we were fashioned like him. Whoso does not attain to being one with God in spirit is not a really spiritual man.

Good, pious souls are hindered too from their proper object by lingering with holy joy over the human form of our Lord Jesus Christ; and by the same token, over-reliance upon visions is a pitfall to some people; they see things pictured in the mind, it may be man or angel or the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and give credence to their ghostly messages. They hear, perhaps, that they are best-beloved or about the faults or virtues of another; or they may hear that God is doing something for them. In this they are deceived. God never does a single thing for creature but only by reason of his kindness, for he is the end of every Christian prayer: 'Do this, O Lord, for the sake of thy only Son Christ Jesus.' He himself said to his disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I should go away.' Here he was addressing not alone his then disciples but all his disciples of the future who purpose to follow him to high achievement. To them his manhood is a hindrance so long as they still cling to it with mortal pleasure; they ought to follow God in all his ways and not keep solely to his way of manhood who reveals to us the way of Godhood; for verily Christ said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me, and he who would enter by any other door the same is a murderer and deserves eternal death.' Such are those who claim that they themselves are capable of good or that God does things for them, whereas Christ even, stated he was not from himself: the Eternal Wisdom said about itself, 'He that created me reposes in my tent,' who withal is uncreated, for God is unborn wisdom. We may take this as referring to eternal wisdom's birth, for the Son proceeded forth by way of birth, where birth is the same thing as creation. The eternal wisdom was born of the power of the Father. He and the

Son, his wisdom, and the Holy Ghost, his goodness and their mutual love, these (three) are one in nature and distinct in Person. And what is this tent that Wisdom talks of? That is the manhood of Christ Jesus, wherein the Father reposes with his Son, they being of one nature, God in their Person as well as God by nature. This tent of humanity let us adore only in its oneness with the Godhead: for man is truly God and God is truly man. Let us not encumber ourselves with any creature excepting Jesus Christ, who only is our help and the way to his Father. When, taking leave of creatures, we enter the true path, which is Jesus Christ, we are not wholly blest albeit within sight of the divine reality; for while we are in sight of, we are not yet one with, what we see. While we notice any thing we are not one with it. Where there is no more than one no more than one is seen: God is not seen except by blindness, nor known except by ignorance, nor understood except by fools. According to St Augustine, no soul can get to God who goes not without creature and seeks not God without likeness. And that is the meaning of Christ's words, 'Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye and then wash the mote out of another's eye.' For you must understand that anything created is likened to a beam in the eye of the soul, preventing divine oneness by the fact of being creature. And because the soul is creature she has to cast herself out of herself; she must cast out all the saints and eke our Lady, for all of them are creatures. She must be quite naked and wholly unnecessitous. Thus the soul enters the union of the Holy Trinity. She is further blest by becoming one with the naked Godhead whereof the blessed Trinity is the self-revelation. In the abstract Godhead there is no activity: the soul is not perfectly beatified until she casts herself into the desolate Deity where neither act nor form exists and there, merged in the void, loses herself: as self she perishes, and has no more to do with things than she had when she was not. Now, dead to self, she is alive in God and the dead perish (in the tomb). Even so is naughted the soul entombed in God.

Some people fondly ween that they have gotten into the Holy Trinity who have never got beyond themselves. Loath to leave themselves, they keep their selfish interests and pleasures and interior sweetness, all of which they have forsworn, just the same in thought and will. These are no disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ who never looked for sweetness in anything he did; on the contrary, he said, 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' Meaning his most lofty soul, and he was thinking also of his bodily life. This was 'sorrowful even unto death,' until a term was put to the conditions of our exile, until our death was dead. And our soul too is 'troubled even unto death,' until there dies within us

whatever is alive there of own will, own interests and multitudinous will. When the soul is dead as to the life of her desires and selfish interests and is buried in God, then, hidden and unknown to any creature, she can never be troubled any more.

Now mark the signs whereby a soul is known to have been taken into the Holy Trinity. First, it is vouchsafed to her that at the sight of the Holy Ghost her sins are blotted out and she forgets herself and things. In the next place, she has gotten a conception of the Godhead, namely the eternal wisdom of the Father, the knowledge and discernment of all things; and she is bereft of opinion, hypothesis, belief, for now she knows the truth; and whereas hitherto she has taken things on trust and learnt by wordy arguments and hearsay, now things presented to her, whether by men or angels, she need ask none about, like those with no notion of reality, who, when an abstract truth is revealed to them, will try to grasp it with their finite mind: a thing that is beyond angelic understanding. Whereupon they question others on the subject, propounding it in the material form in which they have conceived it, and these take it as they hear it, in a concrete sense, and so pronounce it wrong and contrary to the Christian faith. It is false to them, because they accept it at face-value, which they are unable to see through. In this they are mistaken. Furthermore, the soul who is in truth translated into the Holy Trinity is immediately endowed by the Father's power and strength with the ability to do all things. As St Paul says, 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.' Now the soul works not, knows not, loves not; but God is working in her, perceiving himself in her. According to the words of Jeremiah, 'Verily ye are God's in divine knowing and loving.' God help us to this truth. Amen.

2

I GO TO HIM THAT SENT ME

Vado ad eum qui misit me (*Joh.* 16_5). 'I go to him that sent me.' These words have a threefold meaning. In the first place, Christ went to his Father in his manhood. In the second place, the soul of Christ went in the light of grace. In the third place, the soul of Christ went in his Godhead.

About this saying, Thomas, Origen, Damascenus and Richardus hold the same opinion, and I hold it with them. What we say is, that Christ in his manhood went first through our manhood; he has known all the wants that flesh is heir to, for he has been through every creature and set creature lower than mankind: the humanity of Christ has carried our humanity beyond the realm of creature, exalting our nature above the angelic nature in the unity of God

and man. The manhood of Christ went also by itself without impediment of creature, for he alone was ever perfect in virtue at every point of time.

In the second place, the soul of Christ went without means in the light of grace. In the light of grace the soul of Christ received four gifts which Mary his mother never did receive nor did any of the saints. The first gift of Christ's soul was wisdom, the knowledge of his end. The second gift was understanding, which his soul received on achieving virtue as distinct from means. The third gift Christ's soul received was that in all she did she remained unchanged. The fourth gift was that of doing nothing except in virtue of the love of God.

In the third place, the soul of Christ went in his godhood; he went, that is to say, in the personality of the eternal Word, for this eternal Person is essentially the vehicle of human nature. He also went the way of the three Persons of whom he is one Person. He went in his own nature to the Father-nature in the understanding of them both. And he went in the work of the Person of the Holy Ghost, who effects the union of human nature and divine Person. Touching Christ's words, 'I go to him that sent me,' Lincolniensis and Master Henry Augustiniensis tell us what he means by 'go.' I hold with Thomas and Gilbertus that by this word he meant to say, 'I go to release you from the straits whereto ye have been brought by Adam's transgression; I go to set you free from the bonds of creature; I go to him that sent me, in my understanding wherein I take you straight to him; I go the way of my own nature, the way of my lordship, wherein alone I keep unto myself what creature has no part nor lot in. He went in essence and in nature; he went to reveal in his own Person the essence and the life to creatures in separation; for the Persons are God in their personal divinity according to their nature's unity.

Here arises the question, Is the Person of the nature or the nature of the Person? In answering this it must be borne in mind that it is the nature of the Persons to manifest the fruits of their own nature.

The soul too goes to the Father. First, in the fixed intention to cumber herself no more with creature unless with the objective form of Christ. Secondly, she goes in responding to whatever calls God may make upon her. Thirdly, she goes in the sweet savour of divine love wherein suffering is no suffering to her. Christ ascended into heaven; he ennobled his humanity by withdrawing it from time and establishing it in eternity. Lifting up his soul he gave her his essential self, the essence he is ever making manifest in his personal works. Further, the soul ascends flying with the feathers of the virtues, wisdom, prudence, strength

and justice namely, for on these four virtues the soul is able to wing her way past time and past all creatures which exist in time. And she flies as well in the three godly virtues of faith, hope and charity, resting in the love that is God, wherein we behold the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Now it must be remembered that three kinds of men see God. The first see him in faith ; they know no more of him than what they can make out through a partition. The second behold God in the light of grace but only as the answer to their longings, as giving them sweetness, devotion, inwardness and other such-like things which are issuing from his gift. The third kind see him in the divine light. Christ's disciples beheld God as the satisfaction of their longings, but they did not see him as one who longs to love. Philip said to Jesus, ' Lord, show us the Father and satisfy us,' as though to say, Lord, show us thyself as transcending creature, as the immediate entry to the soul which thou dost nature in her proper nature. Jesus answered, ' He that seeth me seeth my Father,' as though to say, Whoso seeth me unchanging, as well disposed towards them that would wound as towards them that show the wish to please me ; whoso seeth me apart from my humanity as the door into the soul, the same beholds my Father as energising in his personal power and I in personal wisdom and the Holy Ghost in personal goodness : having God means having all these three in the one essence of their nature.

3

THE SOUL'S PLACE [1]

Our Lord said to his disciples, ' It is expedient for you that I should go away, for while I am with you the Holy Ghost will not come unto you.' With these words our Lord comforted his disciples after supper on the eve of his departure, knowing full well that they were sorrowful at finding he was going to leave them. Our Lord will not long suffer his lovers to be troubled. Fear is cruel and therefore incompatible with love. As a man gains in love he loses his fear. But at the beginning of conversion fear goes through the soul as the awl goes through the shoe in making a passage for the thread ; and even so the heart is pierced with fear of sin which is then followed and chased out by love. Our Lord's words to his disciples, ' I go to prepare a place for you,' teach us two valuable lessons of which we have the proofs in his ascension.

The first one is, that the soul is by nature made for heaven and God is her lawful heritage. For God brought forth the soul

[1] A variant of LXXV. In Pfeiffer's text it is part of (2).

alone in lineal descent and no man knoweth what she is. They say she is a light, for as the sunlight is poured forth in beams upon all creatures, even so the soul is the immediate product of the light of God. St Augustine says, the soul proceeds from God and returns to God, so she is not at rest except in him. The soul is a spirit formed in the likeness of God and agreeable to him as one spirit is to another. Philosophers, again, compare the soul with fire, a thing most lofty in its nature, most theurgic in its operation, which never stops until it licks the heavens. Fire encircles all the elements; spreading much wider and higher than the air or than water or the earth it envelops all of them. It comes next to heaven and revolves therewith; the air goes rather slower because it is more dense, and water being denser still is unable to keep pace and runs behind. The soul is called a fire because in her desire she can keep up with God like fire with the heavens, nor has she any rest except in him. Also, the soul is called a spark of God's celestial nature, and this jumps with our theory that the soul is intrinsically heavenly. For where one clod falls there earth in general would fall as well; and thus a single clod of earth will betray the resting-place of the earth itself; so too the spark which shoots out of the fire will indicate the resting-place of fire. Now we have sent a spark to heaven, namely the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ, which shows the resting-place of souls is nowhere else than heaven; yonder they belong. But the resting-place of body, made up as it is of the four elements, is by nature upon earth, and yet God joins these twain to one another and fates them to remain together: soul and body for their mutual uses. Of this God found a wise solution, himself becoming man and going in his proper power to heaven, the resting-place of Jesus Christ being in union with his Father. And since God is threefold in his Persons and simple in his nature, they having one common life and being, it follows that the place our Lord Jesus Christ prepares for our life and being is that of eternal union with God.

The other thing Christ taught by his ascension is what preparations we must make for following him, pursuant to his words, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' Just as it is upon four grounds that soul is called light, spirit, fire and a spark of God's celestial nature, so we must be prepared in four particulars. When Moses would have gone and looked at the burning bush upon Mt. Sinai God told him to put off his shoes, which teaches us four lessons.

The first is in the name Moses, which means, taken from the water, and so shall we be taken out of instability, rescued from the storm of the world-flow. Next, all our animal passions, with their agitations, must be herded up into the very topmost, the ghostly

power of the soul. Unless the soul is raised to a higher power, from temporal to celestial things, the Holy Ghost cannot enter in to do its work in her. The work God does is wrought by him in spirit, and any temporal or mundane thing obstructs the flow of God. On this account Christ said to his disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I should go away,' for his disciples loved him as a man and mortal, so that despite his being the most perfect good God ever sent or that could become, yet he was a hindrance to his followers by his bodily presence; how much more then must gross temporal things be hindrances to us? The soul must rise above herself and above this time if she wants God to do his work in her. However well we see and understand the act of divine love we cannot in this body perfectly attain thereto any more than Moses could reach the burning bush. But we must regulate our lives so as to get to Christ our Lord when time is done.

4

HINDRANCES

When the disciples knew their Lord was leaving them he said, 'It is expedient for you that I should go away, for unless I go away ye will not receive the Holy Ghost.' Three kinds of people are hindered from so doing.

First, sinners who by using creatures at their godless pleasure hinder their soul's beatitude. These are wanderers in the way of God. Concerning them St Augustine says, 'Accursed are they that wander in God's way.' I will not here discuss them further; following their animal passions they turn their back on God. Also, there are some who are over-fond of ministering to their outward wants. Touching these our Lord Jesus said, 'He that loveth his soul shall lose it' (or, in other words, to pander to the body is to lose the soul), 'and he that hateth his soul shall keep it' (meaning those that follow not their own inordinate desires).

Secondly, a number of good people are hindered by the seven sacraments. *Sacramentum* means a sign, and anyone who rests content merely with the sign will never get to the interior truth. But the seven sacred rites all point us to the unique reality. Marriage, for example, is a symbol of divine and human nature, an earnest of the union of the soul with God. And anyone who lingers in the mere illusion is kept from the eternal fact. It is no true marriage when a man and woman indulge their sensual passions and live according to their fleshly lusts; married life involves keeping the marriage rule with its seven times and its works of mercy.

Thirdly, many pious souls are hindered by scrupulosity in

confession and repentance, the outward forms thereof, but they take no trouble about the truth itself. Jesus says of these,' He that has bathed needs but to wash his feet ' ; once cleansed, that is, by genuine sorrow and confession, no man has need to re-confess old sins ; but he should wash the feet of his desire and purify his conscience by shriving from new faults. And devout souls are hindered too from spiritual attainment by indulgence in sheer physical enjoyment of the humanity of Christ. When our Lord said to his disciples, ' It is expedient for you that I should go away,' he was addressing not them only but all who in the days to come should try to follow him to high achievement. For these there is a hindrance in his manhood if, regardless of his Godhood, they content themselves with that. We ought to follow God in all his ways, not keep to his humanity as distinct from his divinity.

The Lord Jesus said, ' I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me, and whoso shall enter by any other door the same is a thief and a robber.' He also said he was not from himself. The Eternal Wisdom said, ' He that created me is resting in my tent ' and withal is uncreated. Christ is the born wisdom and power of the Father. His wisdom is the Son and his goodness is the Holy Ghost, they being of one nature and distinct in Person. And this tent that Wisdom speaks of is the humanity of Christ wherein the Father reposes with his Son and with the Holy Ghost who are alike in nature and are God in Person. Wherefore let us worship this tent of his humanity solely in its oneness with his deity. For man is truly God and God is truly man. Nor ought we to encumber ourselves with any creature excepting Jesus Christ, who is our saving way to his heavenly Father and apart from whom there is no other way. But albeit we have taken leave of creature and entered the true path, which is Jesus Christ, we are not wholly blest. Though we are in sight of the divine reality we are not yet the same as what we see. St Augustine says, No soul can get to God who goes not minus creature to find God minus likeness. And this finds warrant in Christ's words, ' Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye then thou canst take the mote out of thy brother's eye.' Whence we draw the moral that any temporal thing is a beam in the eye of the soul and prevents divine oneness. It follows that the soul will have to cast herself out of herself and stand all bare of creature and wholly unnecessitous, for so she puts herself upon a par with God who, naked and unindigent of things, goes absolutely free from matter. Thus at length the soul enters the union of the Holy Trinity to be wholly blest when, casting herself into the desert of the Godhead where neither act nor form exists, she is

lost to self in the rapture of reunion : as self she comes to naught and has no more to do with things than she had when she was not. Now dead to self she is alive in God. But the dead perish in the tomb. So perishes the soul as such, entombed in the desert of the Godhead. Of such St Paul declares, ' Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.' According to Dionysius, burial in God is nothing but the crossing over into uncreated life. This crossing is beyond the ken of multitudinous knowledge.

Such is the nature of the soul that where she is she is entire : where this nature exists it exists as a whole in each member ; and by the same token, God is in all places and in every creature, for what lives in the soul is none other than God. So leaving everything to him let her depart from all that is not God nor rest until she grasps the uncreated God. So help us our Lord Jesus Christ who, as though to-day, ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father with whom and with the Holy Ghost he is the working of the Deity. Amen.

LXXVII[1]

THE IMAGE IN THE SOUL

Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (*Gen.* 1_{26}). God said, ' Let us make man in our image.' What is God's speaking ? The Father observing himself with impartible perception perceives the impartible purity of his own essence. There he sees the image of creatures as a whole, there he speaks himself. His Word is his clear perception and that is his Son. God's speaking is his begetting.

God said, ' Let us make.' Theologians ask : Why did not God say, ' Let us do ' or ' Let us work ? ' Doing is an outward act beseeming not the inward man. Work comes from the outward and from the inward man, but the innermost man takes no part in it. In making a thing the very innermost self of a man comes into outwardness.

When God made man the innermost heart of the Godhead was concerned in his making. A heathen philosopher says, God made all things with wisdom. The Doctor says, ' The Son is the wisdom or love of the Father wherewith he made all things.'

God said, ' Let us make man.' Why did God not say, ' Let us make manhood,' for it was manhood that Christ took ? Man and manhood differ. Talking of man we mean a person ; talking of manhood we mean human nature. Philosophers define what nature is. It is the thing that essence can receive. Hence God assumed manhood and not man. It is written in the book of

[1] See also Greith, pp. 99–104, etc.

Moses, Adam was the first man that God ever made. And I say that Christ was the first man God made. How so? The philosopher says, what is first in intention is last in execution. When a carpenter builds a house his first intention is the roof and that is the finish of the house.

God said, 'Let *us* make man.' Whereby he gave it to be understood that he is more than one: three in Person, one in essence. St Augustine relates that when he was looking for the image in the soul he sought it in the outward man, and there he found four likenesses and three links and two faces. He found nothing of the image. Then he hunted for it in the inner man, and there he found one thing which answered to the simple essence in its simplicity and to the various Persons in its trinity of powers. He found two faces to it. One working downwards and the other upwards. With the lower face she knows herself and outward things. The upper face has two activities; with one she knows God and his goodness and his emanation; with this she loves and knows him to-day and not to-morrow. I love God to-day and not to-morrow. Now the image will not lie in her three powers, by reason of their instability. Another power is in the highest face, which is concealed; in this concealment lies the image.

The image has five properties. First, it is made by another. Secondly, it answers to that same. Thirdly, it has emanated from it; not that it is the divine nature but it is a substance subsisting in itself; it is the pure light that emanates from God and only differs from him in understanding God. Fifthly, it tends towards what it came from. Two things adorn this image. One is, it is *according* to him; the other, there is somewhat of eternity therein. The soul has three powers: the image does not lie in them; but she has one power: the actual (or active) intellect.

Now St Augustine and the New Philosophers declare that in this lies impartible memory, intellect and will, and these three are inseparate, *i.e.* the hidden image answers to God's essence. The divine being (God) is shining straight into this image, and the image shines straight into God with nothing between.

May God come into us and we into him and be united with him, So help us God. Amen.

LXXVIII

THE SPECULATIVE INTELLECT

St Paul reminds us that we being planted in the likeness of God may attain to higher and truer vision. For this St Dionysius says we require three things. The first is, possession of one's

mind. The second is, a mind that is free. The third is, a mind that can see. How can we acquire this speculative mind? By a habit of mental concentration.

The soul has a ghostly spot in her where she has all things matter-free just as the first cause harbours in itself all things immaterially. The soul has also a light in her with which she creates all things. When this light and this spot coincide so that each is the seat of the other, then, only then, one is in full possession of one's mind. What more is there to tell? It means our outward man's farewell to all satisfaction in creatures and the inner man's being so meet for God that nothing arises within him that he would have changed: then, not till then, a man is self-possessed. This cannot happen here for, as the Doctor says, when this that we are speaking of befalls, the highest power of the soul sees God in her own power. As St Dionysius puts it, Then the soul is not called soul, she is the sovran power of God.

The second thing is a free mind. Freedom means not being in any way bound; our being as free and clear and unalloyed as we were in our first emanation when we were loosed in the Holy Ghost.

The third is the speculative mind. Herein the soul sees God. What does the soul see when she sees God? Dionysius says she sees the one power. This unique power makes her one with it. She sees in him also the good passing good, embracing all good things. He wants to entice us out of ourselves, to make us unwilling to stay in ourselves. As the heathen philosopher says, The arch delight, all delights excelling, attracts the soul out of all enjoyments into the sovran truth where all things end. And the same master says, Why are we unaware of this? Because we are bent on lower things. Supposing that we find ourselves desirous of God before all else, then God has touched this highest power. By this touch she is moved out of herself and into him; not that she is moved by grace as one thing moves another, for she has no body to her deity. St Dionysius says that the motion of the soul is as in a circle, since she never varies from her centre.

He says too, God is splendid, and this by reason of three things. He is clear, he is a mutual illumination, he is one and the same. What does clear mean? Free from admixture of body; persisting in his purity or light-nature. According to the scriptures, the soul is sevenfold clearer than the sun. The sun is clear albeit a corporal thing. But I declare the soul to be an hundredfold clearer than the sun, for the sun is bodily whereas the soul is ghostly. And her surpassing clarity is due to the ascendency of spirit over matter. Now if the soul is clear like this then God must be infinitely

clearer, for he created her, and the cause is more than its creature has.

He is also a mutual illumination, for all that is in God is God. And St Augustine says the Father and the Son shine into each other in the Holy Ghost, who is the tie between them. And the three hypostases, which are the three Persons, have one nature, like three lights with one shine. So too with us there should be unanimity, all multiplicity focussed to the highest power and this sovran power cast into God there to abide without reflection.

Thirdly, he is one and the same, this being characteristic of divinity, which is the same as unity. This is not said of creature, for it cannot be maintained of any creatures that it is from themselves they have their being. St Paul says, 'What we have we have received from the unique good, God namely, from whom are all good things.' Things are not from themselves. That which is from itself and from which all things are, is God. It is expressly taught that God is one and the same. And it is for us to be like him. When we have parted from ourselves then we are not-being rather than being. May we, being planted in the likeness of God, attain to higher and truer vision, So help us God. Amen.

LXXIX

THE SON OF THE WIDOW

Adolescens, tibi dico: surge (*Luc.* 7_{14}). To-day we read in the gospel about the widow with an only son who had died. And our Lord came to him and said, 'Young man, arise!' And he sat up.

By the widow we understand the soul; her husband was dead, so her son was dead also. Her son we take to mean her intellectual nature. Our Lord, sitting by the well, said to the woman, 'Go home and fetch me thine husband.' Not hers that living water which is the Holy Ghost; that is vouchsafed alone to those who are quickened in their understanding. Intellect is the summit of the soul. It has fellowship and intercourse with the angels in angelic nature. Angelic nature no time can touch, nor can time touch the intellectual nature. Unless she lives in this her son will die. She was a widow. No creature lives but has some good and some shortcomings. She was a widow in this sense: intellect was dead in her, and with it perished also the fruit of it, the Son.

Widow, in another sense, suggests abandonment, one who is forsaken. Even so must we abandon creatures and forsake them utterly. The prophet says, 'The woman who is barren, more in number are her children than hers who is fruitful.' So with the

soul who travails ghostly: manifold are her offspring, instantly does she bear fruit. The soul that has gotten God is bringing forth fruit all the time. God must needs accomplish his work. God is ever at work in the eternal now, and his work is the begetting of his Son; he is bringing him forth all the while. In his birth all things have proceeded forth, and so great is his pleasure in this birth that he spends his whole energy upon it. God bears himself out of himself into himself; the more perfect this birth is the more does it bear. I say that God is all one, he knows nothing but himself alone. God cannot know himself without knowing all creatures. God gives himself birth all at once in his Son; he says all things in him. He says, 'Young man, arise!'

God exerts all his power in his Son so as to quicken the soul back to God. And hell-torment really means the frequent lapsing of the soul from the purpose of God's effort, which is, to bring the soul to life again. God makes all creatures in a word, but in order to vivify the soul the whole of his power is expended in his Son with intent for the soul to be brought back therein. In his birth she comes to life, and God bears his Son into the soul so as to quicken her. God speaks himself in his Son. In the word wherein he speaks himself in himself he speaks himself into the soul. It belongs to all creatures to be born. A creature without birth would not be at all. According to one master, it is a sign of the divine birth that all creatures are wrought in it. Hence his words, 'Young man, arise!'

The soul has nothing God can speak into excepting her intelligence. Some powers are too vile for God to speak to. He could of course address them, only they would not hear. Will as will is not receptive, not in any wise: will consists in aspiration. So he says, 'Young man, arise!' The powers of the soul age not, they say. Not so the corporal faculties, which flow past and decay. The more a man knows the better he knows, and this ennobles the soul. But the corporal powers do not have this result, so his words, 'Young man, arise!' have reference to the noble powers of the soul.

Philosophers define as *young* things which are near to their beginning. Man has perennial youth in his intellectual nature; the more he is in his active (intellect) the nearer he is to his birth, and a thing near its birth is young. The first issue of the soul is her intellectual nature, next follows will and then all the rest of her powers. Now he says, 'Young man, arise!' The soul herself is one indivisible work; what is wrought by God in the impartible light of the soul is more lovely and fair than the whole of his work in creatures. Yet foolish folk take bad for good and good for bad. To him who understands aright the unique work

of God in the soul is better and nobler and higher than the whole world.

Above this light comes grace. Grace enters neither into intellect nor will. For grace to enter into intellect and will, intellect and will must transcend themselves. A master says, 'There is I know not what, wholly mysterious, above them,' meaning the spark of the soul, the only part of her which is God-receptive. Here in this minute spark, called the spirit of the soul, there occurs true union between the soul and God. Grace never did any virtuous work: it has never done any work at all albeit good works are the outcome of it. Grace does not unify by works. Grace is the inhabiting and co-habiting of the soul in God. Work of whatever kind, external or internal, is beneath it. All creatures are searching for the Godlike. The more vile they are the more they search outside. Air and water, for example, flow away, but heaven steadily goes round and in its course is bringing forth all creatures; therein being godlike so far as in it lies. Moreover, in its motion it is seeking rest. Heaven never condescends to serve inferior creatures. And in this it is very much like God. God's birth of himself in his Son is denied to creatures. But heaven is striving after this act which God performs in himself. And if heaven does this, and also other creatures much baser than the soul, then it is thankless and shameful of her to make such scant effort to compass such things as resemble the works God does in eternity.

According to philosophers, the soul can give birth to herself in herself and bear herself out of herself back into herself. In her natural light she works wonders; she is able to separate one. Fire and heat are one: in her intellect she divides them. Wisdom and goodness are one in God: in her intellect wisdom is never envisaged as goodness. Why? Because wisdom enters more into God. The soul brings forth in her God out of God into God; she is with young in her very self, and this by dint of her nearness to God, of her being the image of God.

As I have often said, image as image, *i.e.* as a reflection, is an inseparable thing. Soul as living in the reflection of God has real union no creature can sever. Not God himself, not angels, nor any sort of creature is able to disjoin the soul who is in the image of God. That is true union, and therein lies true happiness. Various philosophers are in search of happiness. My verdict is, that happiness lies neither in intellect nor will: happiness lies above them both, and it is there as happiness and not as intellection, and God is there as God and soul as the image of God. May he unite us to him in this sense, So help us God. Amen.

LXXX

THERE IS ONE POWER IN THE SOUL

Adolescens, tibi dico: surge (*Luc.* 7_{14}). We read in St Luke's gospel about a youth who was dead. And our Lord came and took compassion on him and touched him and said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, I command thee, Arise!'

Now you must know that in all good people God is present all at once and there is something in the soul wherein God lives and something in the soul where the soul lives in God, and if the soul turns outwards towards external things she dies and God dies also in the soul. But he does not die in himself at all and he is alive to himself. Just as, when the soul leaves the body the body dies and the soul lives on in herself, so God may be dead to the soul and be alive to himself. And know, there is one power in the soul wider than wide heaven, which is so incredibly extensive that we are unable to define it, and yet this power is much vaster still.

Mark now. In this exalted power the Father is saying to his one-begotten Son, 'Young man, arise!' It is God, and the closeness of its union with the soul is past belief, for God is so lofty in himself that nothing whatsoever can attain thereto by understanding. It is wider than the heavens, aye than all the angels, albeit one angelic spark is the cause of all the life on earth. Desire is far-reaching, limitless. All that mind can conceive, all that heart can desire, that is not God. Where desire and understanding end, in the darkness, there shines God.

Quoth our Lord, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!' If I am to hear God speaking in me I must be wholly estranged from all that is mine, as strange as I am to things under the sea, and especially from time. The soul is as young in herself as when she was made, for age as relating to her is an affair of the body, affecting her use of its senses. As one philosopher observes, an old man with the eyes of youth would see just as well as a boy. I made a statement yesterday which seems almost incredible, I said that Jerusalem is as near my soul as the ground I stand on now. 'Aye, in good sooth, a thousand leagues beyond Jerusalem is every whit as nigh my soul as my own body is, of that I am as sure as of my being a man, and to any learned clerk it is not hard to understand.' Know then that my soul is as young as when I was created, aye, much younger. And I tell you, I should be ashamed were she not younger to-morrow than to-day.

The soul has two powers which have nothing whatever to do with the body, namely intellect and will, which function above time. Oh, if only the soul's eyes were opened so that her under-

standing might behold the truth! Then it would be as easy to a man to give up everything as to give up peas and lentils, aye upon my soul, to him all things would be but vanity. There are some who give up things for love albeit greatly prizing what they leave. But to this man who knows in truth, it matters not one whit that he should leave himself and everything, for anyone who takes this course has all things for his own in truth.

There is one power in the soul to which all things are alike sweet; the very worst and the very best are all the same in this power which takes things above here and now. *Now* meaning time and *here* meaning place. This place I am in now, suppose I went out of myself and were entirely empty, why then I ween the heavenly Sire would bear his only Son within my mind so clearly that my spirit would bear him back again. Verily, were my spirit as ready as the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ then would the Father energise in me as perfectly as in his one-begotten Son, no less, seeing that he loves me with the selfsame love wherewith he loves himself.

St John said, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' Now to hear this Word in the Father (where it is absolutely silent), a man must be quite quiet and wholly free from images, aye, and forms as well. A man must be so true to God that nothing whatever can gladden him or sadden him. He must see all things in God, as they are there.

He says, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!' Meaning to effect this thing himself. If someone tells me to carry one stone he may as well tell me a hundred if he is going to do it himself. If he orders a hundredweight load he may just as well make it a thousand if it is for his own back. And God will do this work himself if only we will wait and not resist. If the soul would but stay within, she would have everything there. There is one power in the soul and that not merely power but being; and not merely being: it radiates life, and is so pure, so high and so innately noble that creatures cannot live in it; none but God can abide therein. Nay, even God himself is forbidden there so far as he is subject to condition. God cannot enter there in any guise: God is only there in his absolute divinity.

Then, the fact of his speaking the words, 'Young man, I say unto thee.' What is God's speaking? It is his working, and God's work is so noble, so sublime, that God alone can do it. You must understand then, that our whole perfection, our entire happiness, will lie in traversing and transcending all creatureliness, all time and all limitation and getting into the cause which is causeless. We pray thee O Lord, that we may be one and indwelling. So help us God. Amen.

LXXXI

I HAVE CHOSEN YOU

Ego elegi vos de mundo (*Joh.* 15_{19}). These words which I quote in the Latin are from the gospel of to-day, the feast of one of the saints, Barnabas by name, who is commonly referred to in the scriptures as being an apostle. Our Lord says, 'I have elected you, selected you, chosen you out of the world, from all created things, that ye should bring forth much fruit and that your fruit should remain,' for it is very good to bring forth fruit and for the fruit to remain, and the fruit does remain if we dwell in love. At the end of this gospel our Lord says, 'Love one another as I have ever loved you; my Father hath loved me eternally and so have I loved you; keep my commandments, so shall ye remain in my love.'

All God's commandments come from love, from the kindness of his nature; did they not come from love they would not be God's law, for God's law is the goodness of his nature and his nature his benignant law. Whoso dwells in love dwells in the goodness of his nature: he dwells in God's love, and love is without why. Suppose I had a friend and loved him for benefits received and because of getting my own way, I should not love my friend, I should be loving my own self. I ought to love my friend on his own account, for his virtues, for his own intrinsic worth: I love my friend aright loving him like this. And so with the man abiding in God's love, seeking not his own in God nor in himself nor in any thing but loving God simply for his kindness, for the goodness of his nature, for what he is in himself: that is true love. Love of virtue is the flower, the ornament of virtue, aye, the mother of all virtue, all perfection and all happiness: it is God, for God is the fruit of virtue, and it is this fruit which remains to man. When a man works for fruit and the fruit remains to him he rejoices greatly. Suppose he has a vineyard or a field and makes it over to his man to work while keeping all the produce; he may give into the bargain all the things thereto belonging and still be much rejoiced to have the fruits remain in payment. Even so a man rejoices in the fruit of virtue; he has no worries, no vexations, because he has made over himself and everything.

Our Lord says, 'Whoso shall leave anything for me and for my name's sake, to him will I restore an hundredfold and eternal life to boot.' But if thou leave it for that hundredfold and for the sake of eternal life, thou art leaving nothing; nay, so thou leave it for a thousandfold reward thou art leaving nothing: leave thyself, give up self altogether, that is real riddance. A man once came

to me (it was not long ago), and told me he had given up a quantity of land and goods to save his soul. Alack! I thought, how paltry, how inadequate, the things thou hast resigned. It is blindness and folly so long as thou dost care a jot for what thou hast forsworn. Forswear thyself, that is true resignation.

The man who has resigned himself is so impartial, this world will have none of him, as I said here not long ago. The devotee of justice is given up to justice, seized of justice, identified with justice. I once wrote in my book: The just man serves neither God nor creature: he is free; and the more he is just the more he is free and the more he is freedom itself. Nothing created is free. While there is aught above me, excepting God himself, it must constrain me, however small it be or however (great); even love and knowledge, so far as it is creature and not actually God, confines me with its limits. The unjust man, whether he would or no, is the servant of illusion: serving the world and creature he is the bondman of sin.

I was thinking lately: that *I am a man* belongs to other men in common with myself; I see and hear and eat and drink like any other animal; but that *I am* belongs to no one but myself, not to man nor angel, no, nor yet to God excepting in so far as I am one with him. All God's work he puts into his one replica of himself, and though radically differing in their operation, (creatures) all tend to reproduce themselves. In my father nature took its normal course. In the course of nature I should be a father like himself. The tendency is ever towards self-repetition, towards the preservation of the species: it is every man's intention that his work should be himself. Any shifting or hindering of his nature and the result is woman: thus where nature stops God begins to work and to create; for without woman there would be no men. The child as conceived within its mother's womb has shape and colour and material being; so much is wrought by nature. That lasts for forty days and forty nights, and on the fortieth day God creates the soul in much less than the twinkling of an eye. Now ends the work of nature, all nature can contrive in colour, form and matter. The activity of nature goes out altogether, and as the natural energy is finally withdrawn it is restored intact in the rational soul. This then is the work of nature and the creation of God. In created things (as I have said repeatedly) there is no truth.

There is something, transcending the soul's created nature, not accessible to creature, non-existent; no angel has gotten it, for his is a clear (intelligible) nature, and clear and overt things have no concern with this. It is akin to Deity, intrinsically one, having naught in common with naught. Many a priest finds

it a baffling thing. It is one; rather unnamed than named, rather unknown than known. If thou couldst naught thyself an instant, less than an instant, I should say, all that this is in itself would belong to thee. But while thou dost mind thyself at all thou knowest no more of God than my mouth does of colour or my eye of taste: so little thou knowest, thou discernest, what God is.

Plato, that great priest, who occupied himself with lofty matters, makes reference to this thing. He speaks about a light which is not in this world; not in the world and not out of the world; not in time nor in eternity: it has neither in nor out. God the eternal Father, the fullness and the sink of all his deity does he give birth to here in his one-begotten Son, so that we are that very Son, and his birth is his presence within and his abiding within is his bringing forth. That remains ever the same which comes welling up in itself. *Ego*, the word *I*, is proper to none but to God himself in his sameness. *Vos*, the word implies your collective unity, so that *ego* and *vos*, I and you, stand for unity. May we be the unity itself, unity abiding, So help us God. Amen.

LXXXII

THE FEAST OF MARTYRS

In occasione gladii mortui sunt (*Hebr.* 11_{37}). We read of the blessed martyrs, whom we commemorate to-day, that they were slain with the sword. Quoth our Lord to his disciples, 'Blessed are ye when ye suffer for my name's sake.' And according to the scriptures these martyrs suffered death for Christ's name, being put to the sword.

Here we learn three things. First, that they are dead. Man's sufferings in this world have an end. St Augustine says pain and the work of pain is finite and the reward is infinite.—Secondly, that, seeing this life is mortal, we have no need to fear all the pain and travail falling to our lot, for it will end. Thirdly, that it behoves us to emulate the dead in dispassion towards good and ill and pain of every kind. The philosopher says heaven is immoveable. Referring to the soul as being the heavenly man who is imperturbable. One master enquires, If creatures are so vile, how comes it they so easily distract the soul from God: is not the soul at her vilest better than heaven and all creatures? The Doctor says it comes of minding too little about God. Were we to pay due heed to God it would be nigh impossible to lapse. From which we draw the moral that we ought in this world

to emulate the dead. According to St Gregory, no one gets so much of God as the man who is throughly dead.

The fourth point is the weightiest. He speaks of their being dead. Death gives them being. A philosopher says, 'Nature never breaks but to mend.' Air to fire, for instance, is a change for the better; but air to water were destruction and untowardness. If this is nature's way much more is it God's: he never destroys without providing something better. The martyrs died: they lost their life and found their being. The philosopher says, 'Most precious is being and life, and knowledge is higher than life and nobler than being, for in knowing we have life and being.' Yet life is nobler than being in the sense that a tree has life whereas a stone has being. Again, take being pure and simple, as it is in itself, and being transcends both knowledge and life, for in that it is being it is both knowledge and life. They have, I say, lost their natural life and have acquired being. The philosopher says there is nothing so like God as being: in so far as it is real being it is the same thing as God. The philosopher says, Being is pure, exalted: all that God is is being. God knows nothing but being, he is conscious of nothing but being; being is his ring. God loves naught save his being, he thinks of naught save his being. I say, all creatures are being. One master says some creatures are so nigh to God and so instinct with divine light that they give being to other creatures. That is not the case: being is too pure, too high, too much the same as God, for anyone but God to be able to give being. God's idiosyncrasy is being. The philosopher says one creature is able to give another life. For in being, mere being, lies all that is at all. Being is the first name. Defect means lack of being. Our whole life ought to be being. So far as our life is being, so far it is in God. So far as our life is akin thereto, so far it is kin to God. There is no life so feeble but taking it as being it excels anything life can ever boast. I have no doubt of this, that if the soul had the remotest notion of what being means she would never waver from it for an instant. The most trivial thing perceived in God, a flower for example as espied in God, would be a thing more perfect than the universe. The vilest thing present in God as being is better than angelic knowledge.

When angels turn to creaturely knowledge, then it grows dark. St Augustine says, When angels know creatures in God, twilight falls; when the soul knows God in creatures it is eventide. But knowledge of creatures in God is the dawn. And when she knows God in himself as pure essence, that is high noon. It should be the soul's desire to see, as though in non-sense, this most noble being. We advocate dying in God, to the end that he may raise

us up to being which is better than life: the being our life subsists in, wherein our life is quickened into actuality. We ought to face death willingly and die in order to obtain a better resurrection.

I said on one occasion that a bit of wood is more precious than gold, a surprising statement. But a stone is nobler (having being) than God and his Godhead without being, if such a thing is possible as to abstract his being. That must be a vigorous life in which dead things revive, in which even death is changed to life. To God naught dies: all things are living in him. They being dead (as the scriptures say about the martyrs) are quickened into life eternal, into the life where living is real being. We must be so throughly dead as to be moved by neither good nor ill. What we know we must know in its cause. We never really know anything in itself till we know it in its cause. There is no understanding it until we apprehend it in its origin. Just as life is never perfected till it returns to its original source, wherein life is real being. The thing that keeps us from remaining there is, as the philosopher explains, our being in contact with time. What time can touch is temporal and mortal. The philosopher states that the heavenly progression is eternal; true, it gives rise to time, and that makes it mortal. In its course it is eternal, all unwitting of time; in other words, the soul obeys the laws of abstract being. Another thing is its being full of opposites. What are opposites? Good and bad, white and black are in opposition, a thing which has no place in real being.

The philosopher says the soul is given to the body for her perfecting. Soul apart from body possesses neither intellect nor will: she is one with no attendant power of speech; true, she has it in her ground, in its root as it were, but not in fact. The soul is purified in body by collecting things scattered and dispersed. The resultant of the five senses, when these are recollected, gives her a common sense wherein everything sums up to one. In the second place, she is purified by a saving habit, that namely of ascending into the unitive life. The soul's perfection consists in liberation from the life which is in part and admission to the life which is whole. All that is scattered in nether things is gathered together when the soul climbs up into the life where there are no opposites. The soul knows no opposition when she enters the light of intellect. Anything short of this light falls into death and dies. Perfection of soul consists, thirdly, in absence of sensible affection. What is prone to aught other shall die, it cannot last. We beseech thee Lord God to help us escape from the life that is divided into the life that is united. So help us God. Amen.

LXXXIII

ST GERMANUS' DAY

In diebus suis placuit deo et inventus est justus (*Eccl.* 44_{17}). In these words which I quote in Latin we celebrate the saint, Germanus by name, whose virtuous life so much is written of and whose festival is kept to-day in holy Christendom.

'In his days,' that means there is more than one day. There is the soul's day and God's day. Days here, all that have passed for seven thousand years, are as near God's day, to-day, as is yesterday. Why? Because time yonder is in the present now. The heavens revolve, hence time; day started when the heavens began to spin. Yonder the soul's day is passing in the present, in her natural light where all things are, where there is perfect day, God's day, day and night in one. Yonder in the day of eternity the soul is in the essential now; there the Father is begetting his (one-begotten Son) in the here and now, there the soul is being reborn in God. As often as this birth takes place she is giving birth to the only Son. Full many are the sons of virgins born who travail in eternity, superior to time. But however many sons the soul gives birth to in eternity she has no more than the one Son, for it is supertemporal: it comes to pass in the eternal day.

Just indeed is he who lives in virtue and in virtuous deeds; who seeketh not his own in any thing, neither in God nor creature. That man dwells in God and God in him. He takes delight in flouting and getting rid of things, in being done with things as far as that is possible. St John says, 'God is love and love is God and he who dwells in love dwells in God.' Doubtless he is well lodged as heir to God, and he in whom God dwells has a good lodger. One of the masters says, God gives the soul a gift which moves her to interior things. And it has been explained that the soul is moved directly by the Holy Ghost, for in the love wherein God loves himself, in that same love he is loving me, and the soul loves God in the same love wherein he loves himself; and were there not this love wherein God loves himself there would be no Holy Ghost at all. It is the heat, the blowing of his holy Breath that the soul loves God in.

In one of the Evangelists we read, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' In another we read, 'This is my beloved Son in whom all things please me.' And in a third we find, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleasing to myself.' Whatever pleases God is pleasing to him in his only Son: whatever God loves he is loving in his only Son. So it

behoves a man to live so that he is one with his only Son, so that he is his only Son. Between the only Son and the soul there is no difference. Between the servant and his lord there is no like love. As long as I am servant I remain unlike, remote from his only Son. If I could see God with my eyes the same as I see colours, that would not be right, for that which is visible is temporal. The temporal taken according to time is taken at its lowest value. *Now* is time and place in itself. While man has time and place, number and quantity, he is not as he should be, is not just, and God is remote and not his own. Our Lord says, 'Whosoever would be my disciple let him forsake himself,' as though to say, no one can hearken to my teaching till he is rid of his own self. All creatures in themselves are naught, and that is why I counsel you to abandon naught and enjoy the perfect state where the will is just. His own will once relinquished man relishes my doctrine and can listen to my word. One master says, All creatures have their being straight from God, therefore by nature God must love them better than they do themselves. Did the soul know its own detachment it would not stoop to any thing.

We say about this bishop, 'He was well-pleasing to him in his days.' The soul's day and God's day are different. In her natural day the soul knows all things above time and place; nothing is far or near. And that is why I say, this day all things are of equal rank. To talk about the world as being made by God to-morrow, yesterday, would be talking nonsense. God makes the world and all things in this present now. Time gone a thousand years ago is now as present and as near to God as this very instant. The soul who is in the here and now, in her the Father bears his one-begotten Son and in that same birth the soul is born back into God. It is one birth; as fast as she is reborn into God the Father is begetting his only Son in her.

I have spoken about one power in the soul; in her first issue she lays hold of God not as being good nor yet as truth: delving deeper still she grasps him in his loneliness, in his solitude; she finds him in his desert, in his actual ground. But being still unsatisfied, on she goes in quest of what it is that is in his Godhead, of the special property of his peculiar nature. They say no property (or, union) is closer than that of the three Persons being one God. And next they put the union of the soul with God. When the soul, being kissed by God, is in absolute perfection and in bliss, then at last she knows the embrace of unity, then at the touch of God she is made uncreaturely, then, with God's motion, the soul is as noble as God is himself. God moves the soul afte his own fashion. God contemplating creature gives it life; creature finds life in contemplating God. The soul has intelligent,

noëtic being, and therefore where God is there is the soul and where the soul is there is God.

Of this saint we say, ' he was found just.' Just means equable, alike in joy and sorrow, in bitter and in sweet; one to whom nothing comes amiss, whom nothing keeps from feeling himself one in righteousness. Like to like. Love loves its like alway and God loves the just man like himself. May we find that we are in this case in the time, in the day of understanding, in the day of wisdom, in the day of beatitude. So help us O undivided Trinity. Amen.

LXXXIV[1]

LIKE THE MORNING STAR

Quasi stella matutina in medio nebulæ etc. (*Eccl.* 50_6). ' Like the morning star in the midst of a cloud and as the moon at the full and as the sun in his glory, so did he shine in the temple of God.' These words are commonly applied to all the saints and teachers who in their virtuous lives and knowledge of God have been a shining light to worldly hearts which, caught with creatures in the fog and cloud of darkness or ignorance, are straying like blind men from the way of eternal liberation, but more especially do they apply to the holy father we celebrate to-day, St Dominic by name, a mainstay of Christendom and founder of the Preaching Order which he started and established to propagate God's word and to help poor sinners.

He shone like the morning star in the temple of God. What is God and what is the temple of God? Four and twenty doctors met together to settle what God is, and they could not do it. Thereafter at a time appointed again they came together bringing each his verdict. Of these I will pick out two or three. One says: God is something to which all changing, temporal things are nothing; all that has being is from him and is insignificant compared with him. Another says: God is somewhat that transcends being, that in itself needs none and that all things need. A third says: God is the intelligence which occupies itself solely in understanding itself.

Passing over the first and the third I will speak of the second: God transcends being. Nothing that has being, time or place is proper to God, he is above them; his being in all creatures shows him superior to them, for that which is the same in many things must be prior to them. According to some doctors, the soul is in the heart alone. Not so; it is an error some eminent Scholastics make. The soul is whole and undivided at once in foot and eye and in each member of the body. Again, I take a span of

[1] Sermon on St Dominic's Day. See also Jostes, No. 31.

time, which need not be to-day or yesterday. But if I take the now that includes all time. The now wherein God made the world is as near this time as the now I am speaking in this moment, and the last day is as near this now as was yesterday.

One of the doctors says : ' God is impartible, eternally energising in himself, immanent, unindigent of instrument or aid, in need of none but what all things need and to which all things tend as to their final goal.' To this goal there is no way, it is beyond all ways, debouching in the open. St Bernard says, ' Divine love is a wont without a way.' The physician who sets out to make a sick man whole has no particular mode of health in view ; he has a mode whereby he hopes to make him well, but how well he hopes to make him is not specified : he will make him as well as he can. How shall we love God then ? As well as we can ; without measure. Each thing works after its own fashion ; things do not work in natures superior to their own ; fire, for example, only works in wood. God works above all natures, in the unconditioned ; wherever he can stir he is at work in modeless mode. Before ever there was being God was working : he wrought in non-existent being. Advanced theology lays down that God is abstract being : he is as much above being as an angel is above a fly. I hold it is as wrong for me to say that God is being as to say the sun is black or white. God is neither this nor that. As St Dionysius says, ' He who thinks that he sees God, if he sees aught sees naught of God.' But when I say God is not being, is superior to being, I do not with that deny him being : I dignify and exalt it in him. If I find some copper in the gold, as existing there it is in a nobler being than itself. St Augustine says ; God is mode-free mode, power-free power, good-free good.

In the elements of the Scholastic teaching, we find being divided into ten modes (or categories), all of which are denied to God. God is subject to none of these modes nor is he deficient in any. The first, which has most being of them all, wherein all things have being, is substance ; and the last, which has least being, is called *relatio*, and in God it is the same as the first one is, which has most being. In God all things have the same form (idea), though this is the form of very different things. The most exalted angel, the soul, the fly, have all the same prototype in God. God is not being nor yet goodness. Goodness cleaves to being and does not go beyond it : if there were no being there would be no goodness. Being is purer than good. In God is no good nor better nor best. To say that God is good is to do him wrong ; as well say that the sun is black. But our Lord himself declares, ' None is good but God alone.' What is good ? That which communicates itself. Him we call a good man who

gives himself and is of use to people. And hence the dictum of a heathen doctor, 'A hermit is neither good nor bad, in the sense of giving himself and helping other people.' God *par excellence* communicates himself. No thing gives of its own being, for creatures are not of themselves. What they give they have gotten from another. Nor do they give themselves. The sun gives light, no more; the fire gives heat, the fire itself remains; but God does give his own, for it is from himself he is and in all the gifts he gives he first and foremost gives himself. In all his gifts he gives himself: God, as he is, so far as the recipient will allow. St James says, 'Every good gift comes down from above from the Father of lights.'

When we take God in his being we take him in the forecourt of his habitation, for quiddity or mode is the way into his temple. Then where is God in his temple? Intellect is the temple of God wherein he is shining in his glory. Nowhere does God dwell more really than in the temple of his intellectual nature, where he is in his stillness by himself, all undisturbed. As one of the doctors says, God in his self-perception is perceiving himself in himself.

Now turning to the soul, she has a drop of intellectual nature, a spark, a ray, and she has sundry powers which function in the body. One is the power of digestion, more active by night than in the day, whereby man grows and thrives. And the soul has a power in the eyes which makes the eye so sensitive and delicate and too fastidious to accept things in the coarse-grained mode they have themselves, but they must first be filtered and refined by light and air, owing to the presence in it of the soul. Another power in the soul is that wherewith she thinks. This power is able to picture in itself things which are not there, so that I can see the things as well as I see them with my eyes, or even better. I can see a rose in winter when there are no roses, therefore with this power the soul produces things from the non-existent, like God who creates things out of nothing.

A heathen philosopher observes that the soul who loves God takes him under the veil of goodness; and so far I have quoted mainly from the heathen doctors who know in the light of nature merely. I have yet to come to the sayings of the saints who see in a light far more exalted. He says then, that the soul in loving God is taking him under the veil of goodness. Intellect draws this veil from God and takes him bare, stripped of goodness, of being and of every name.

At the School [the College of St Jacob] I used to teach that intellect is higher than the will, both as belonging to this light. Another theologian at the other School put will before the intellect on the ground that will enjoys things as they are in themselves,

whereas intellect enjoys them as they are in it. That is quite true. The eye in itself is a better thing than the eye as painted on the wall. Nevertheless, I still maintain that intellect is higher than the will. Will takes God under the garment of good. Intellect seizes him naked, divested of good and of being. Goodness is a garment under which God is concealed and will takes God in this garment of goodness. If God had no goodness my will would repudiate God. It would be unseemly to robe a king in drab on his coronation day. I am not happy by reason of God's goodness. Never should I think of asking God to beatify me with his goodness, for he could not do it. Goodness is his vesture. My beatitude lies wholly and solely in the fact that God is knowable and in my knowing him. A philosopher says, The intellect of God is what angelic being is suspended from.

It is a question where the image really has its being: in the mirror or the object it proceeds from? My image is in me, of me, mine. While the mirror faces me, it is my image in it; if the mirror falls it is my image which has been destroyed. Angelic being likewise depends upon the presence of God's intellectual nature wherein he sees himself like a morning star enveloped in the mist. I always have before my mind this little word *quasi*, *like*: indeed, it is the burden of my entire teaching. What at school the children call a mock, a by-word.

The truest thing that man can predicate of God is word-and-truth. God calls himself a word. And St John says, 'In the beginning was the Word,' meaning that man is a word with the eternal Word. Like Venus, Fria's star, which Friday is named after and which has many names. When it is earlier than the sun and is up before it then it is called the morning star; when it rises later than the sun and the sun sets first then it is called the evening star. Now it is above and now below the sun, but of all the stars it best keeps its distance from the sun, never going far away, and the moral of this is that any man who would attain to God must stay by, in the presence of, God the whole time and refuse to let God be put out of his mind by fortune or misfortune or by any creature whatsoever.

And he says, 'like the moon at the full in his days.' The moon is the ruler of moist nature. The moon is never nearer to the sun than at the full, and then it gets its light at first-hand from the sun, but owing to the fact that of all the stars it is the nearest to the earth, it suffers from two drawbacks: being pale and mottled and also being liable to lose its light. It is never so potent as when it is furthest from the earth, and in that position it tells most upon the sea; when it is on the wane its effect gets less and less. And the higher the soul rises above earthly things the

more powerful she grows. Merely creature-lore will place a man beyond the need of sermons. For every single creature is a book. But anyone who means to get to that whereof we speak, to where my arguments all tend, must be as the morning star: a man in the presence of God, always with him, equally near him and exalted above mundane things: a word by the Word.

There is one word both thought and spoken: angels, the soul and all creatures. Another Word, thought but unspoken, I can conceive. And there is still another Word unthought of and unspoken which never proceeds forth but is eternally in him who speaks it: in the Father, for it is he who speaks it, it is eternally proceeding and abiding. Intellect is intrinsically active and more and more outwardly effective in proportion as it is directed inwards. God's happiness consists in its operation. And here again the soul should be an ad-verb. As the intellect of the soul turns more inwards, the more closely, more minutely is it identified with what it knows. The more powerful it is the more clearly it reflects and is atoned with God. That is not the case with corporal things: the stronger they are the more external is their action. God's happiness lies in the subjective working of the intellect wherein his Word abides. It is this eternal Word the soul should be a word with and, doing one work with God, she will find her happiness in self-perception: in the very thing that God is happy in. May we ever be a word with this Word, So help us the Father and this same Word and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LXXXV[1]

A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU

Mandatum novum do vobis etc. (*Joh.* 13_{34}). In the Gospel of St John we find our Lord's words to his disciples, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'

We know of three kinds of love that our Lord had, and in this we must be like him. One is natural, the second gracious and the third divine. In God there is nothing not God; in ourselves, however, we may consider them as an ascending scale, from good to better and from better to perfection. But in God is neither more nor less, he is just the simple, pure, essential truth.

The first love God has, in this we learn how his divine goodness has constrained him to create all creatures, wherewith he has been big eternally in his ideal preconception, intending them to enjoy

[1] See also Wackernagel, No. 66.

his goodness with him. And among all his creatures he bears no more love to one than to another: as each is able to receive he pours his love therein. Were my soul as capacious, as roomy, as a Seraph's, who has nothing in him, God would pour out into me the same as he does into that angel. If you describe a circle, a ring of dots with one point in the middle, from this point all the dots will be equidistant; for one dot to get nearer it will have to be displaced, for the middle point is constant at the centre. So with divine being: it is not questing round about but abiding altogether in itself. In order to receive from it a creature must infallibly be moved out of itself. And when we talk of man we are talking of all creatures; Christ himself exhorted his disciples, 'Go forth and preach the gospel to all creatures,' for creatures all culminate in man. Not but what, as being, God is pouring himself out into all creatures, to each as much as it can take. Which is a lesson to us to love all creatures equally with what we have received from God (though some are nearer to us by kinship or by natural friendship), as we are favoured equally with the boon of divine love. I sometimes seem to like one better than another, and yet I have the same goodwill towards that other person whom I have never seen, only, by asking more of me, this one enables me to give him myself more. God loves creatures all alike and fills them with his being. And we too should pour forth ourselves in love upon all creatures. We often find the heathen arriving at this amiable state in virtue of their natural understanding. As the heathen philosopher observes, man is by nature a kindly animal.

The second love of God, the spiritual, he is flowing with into the soul and into the angels, and it is by this light which is supernatural that, as I was saying, creature is rapt away out of itself. Creatures are so enamoured of their own natural light, it needs a strong inducement to take them out of it into the light of grace. In his natural light man enjoys himself, but the light of grace, which is unspeakably more powerful, robs him of his self-enjoyment and draws him into itself. As the soul says in the Book of Love, 'Draw me after thee in thy sweet savour.'

Now we cannot love God without first knowing him, but the essential point of God is in the centre, equally far from and near to all creatures, and the only way of getting closer to it is for my natural intellect to be displaced by a light more intense than itself. Supposing, for example, that my eye were a light and strong enough to bear the sunlight in its glory and unite therewith, its interior state would then be due not to itself alone but to the sunlight as well. So with the mind. The intellect is a light, and if I turn it right away from things and in the direction

of God then, since God is perennially flowing with grace, my mind is illumined and united with love and therein knows and loves God as he is in himself. Here we have the explanation of how God is flowing out into rational creatures in his light of grace and how we with our intellect approaching this gracious light are rapt out of ourselves and ascend into the light of God himself.

The third love of God : in this it is granted us to learn how God has been begetting his one-begotten Son and is giving birth to him, as the Doctor says, now and eternally, he, like any woman, being brought to bed in every virtuous soul who has embarked on the interior life. This birth is his understanding, perennially up-springing in his paternal heart, wherein he has gotten all his bliss. All he has to give he expends on understanding : it is his progeny, his only pride. His entire happiness is centred in his Son ; he loves nothing but his Son and all he finds in him ; his Son is the light that has been for ever burning in his paternal heart.

To enter there we shall have to climb by way of natural light into the light of grace and therein wax into the light that is the Son himself. There in the Son we are loved by the Father with his love (his Holy Spirit) which has its eternal source in him and having blossomed forth to his eternal birth (namely the second Person) is wafted by the Son back to the Father as the love of both. The Doctor says, I sometimes think of what the angel said to Mary, ' Hail, full of grace ! ' what is the good to me of Mary's being full of grace if I am not full also ? What does it profit me the Father's giving his Son birth unless I bear him too ? God begets his Son in the perfect soul and is brought to bed therein that she may bring him forth in all her works. Thus we, by the love of the Holy Ghost, being unified into his Son, shall know the Father with the Son and love ourselves in him and him in us with their mutual love.

Whoever would achieve this triple love must needs have four things. The first is, real dispassion towards creatures. The second, the true life of Leah, that is to say, the active life which is set in motion in the ground of the soul by the action of the Holy Spirit. The third thing is, the true life of Rachel, the contemplative life. The fourth is, an aspiring soul. A master was once questioned by his pupil about the angelic order. He answered him and said, Go hence and withdraw into thyself until thou understandest : give thy whole self up to it, then look, refusing to see anything but what thou findest there. It will seem to thee at first as though thou art the angels with them and as thou dost surrender to their collective being thou shalt think thyself the angels as a whole with the whole company of angels. The pupil

went away and withdrew into himself until he found all this in truth in his own ground. Then returning to his master he gave him thanks and said: It was as you foretold. On giving my whole mind to the subject of the angels and aspiring to their estate, at first it seemed to me that I was all the angels with the angels. You see then, said his master, that as you draw a little nearer to the source, wonder after wonder is wrought upon the soul; for while a man is still on the ascent and receiving through the medium of creatures, he has not come to rest. But once he has climbed up into God, there in the Son he will be receiving with the Son the whole of what God has to give. May we, ascending in this way from one love to another, be united into God and there in bliss abide eternally. So help us God. Amen.

LXXXVI[1]

DETACHMENT HAS FOUR STEPS

Detachment has four steps. The first breaks in and makes away with all a man's perishable things. The second one deprives him of them altogether. The third not only takes them but makes them all forgotten as though they had not been, and all about them. The fourth degree is right in God and is God himself. When we get to this stage the King is desirous of our beauty.

LXXXVII

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Beati pauperes spiritu quia ipsorum est regnum cœlorum (*Matt.* 5_3). Beatitude itself opened its mouth of wisdom and said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Angels and saints and everything that was ever born, all must keep silence when the eternal wisdom of the Father speaks; for the wisdom of the angels and all creatures is mere naught compared with the wisdom of God which is unfathomable. This wisdom has declared that the poor are blessed.

There are two kinds of poverty. One is outward poverty, and this is good and much to be commended in him who makes a voluntary practice of it for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose wont it was on earth. About this poverty I shall say no more. But there is another poverty, an interior poverty, whereto refers this saying of our Lord, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit or poor of spirit.' And I would urge you now to be this same if ye

[1] Authorship doubtful. Excerpt only.

would understand my argument, for I do assure you by the eternal truth, excepting ye are like this truth we speak of it is not possible for you to follow me. Several people have asked me what poverty is ? This we will now try to answer.

Bishop Albertus says, ' By a poor man is meant one who is not satisfied with anything God ever made,' and this is well said. But, taking poverty in a higher sense, we say better still, a poor man is one who wills nothing, knows nothing, has nothing. It is on these three heads that I propose to speak.

In the first place, a poor man wills nothing. Some folks mistake the sense of this ; those, for example, who win personal repute by penances and outward disciplines (and are highly esteemed, God 'a mercy, though knowing so little of God's truth !). To all outward appearance these are holy, but they are fools within and ignorant of the divine reality. These people define a poor man to be one who wills nothing. Explaining this to mean that he never follows his own will at all, but is bent on carrying out the will of God. In this they are not bad ; their intention is good, and we commend them for it : God keep them in his mercy. But I trow that these are not poor men nor are they the least like them. They are much admired by those who know no better, but I say they are fools with no understanding of God's truth. Peradventure heaven is theirs by good intention, but of the poverty in question they have no idea.

Supposing someone asked me, What then is a poor man who wills nothing ? I should answer this. As long as it can be said of a man that it is in his will, that it is his will, to do the will of God, that man has not the poverty that I am speaking of, because he has a will, to satisfy the will of God, which is not as it should be. If he is genuinely poor a man is as free from his created will as he was when he was not. I tell you by the eternal truth, as long as ye possess the will to do the will of God and have the least desire for eternity and God, ye are not really poor : the poor man wills nothing, knows nothing, wants nothing.

While I yet stood in my first cause I had no God and I was my own ; I willed not, I wanted not, for I was conditionless being, the knower of myself in divine truth ; then I wanted myself and wanted nothing else ; what I willed I was and what I was I willed. I was free from God and all things. But when I escaped from my free will to take on my created nature, then I got me a God ; for before creatures were, God was not God : he was that he was. When creatures became and started creaturehood, God was not God in himself but he was God in creatures. Now we contend that God as God is not the final goal of creature nor such great riches as the least creature has in God. If a flea had intellect and could

intellectually plumb the eternal abysm of God's being out of which it came, then, so we maintain, not God and all God is could fulfil and satisfy that flea. Wherefore we pray we may be quit of God and get the truth and enjoy eternity, for the highest angel and the soul are all the same yonder where I was and willed that I was and was that I willed. Thus shall a man be poor of will, as little willing and desiring as he willed and wanted when he was not. And in this wise a man is poor who wills nothing.

Secondly, a poor man is one who knows nothing. We have sometimes laid it down that a man ought to live as though he lived not, whether for himself, or truth, or God. But now we change our ground and declare withal, that a person in this poverty has gotten all he was when he lived not in any wise, not to himself, nor truth, nor God: he is so quit, so free of any kind of knowledge that no idea of God is alive in him; for while man stood in the eternal species God, there lived none other in him: what lived there was himself. And so we say this man is as free from his own knowledge as he was when he was not; he lets God travail as he will while he himself stands idle as when he came from God.

Now the question is, Wherein does happiness lie most of all? Some masters say it lies in love. Others, it lies in knowledge and in love, and these come nearer to the mark. We, again, contend it neither lies in knowledge nor in love, but there is in the soul one thing from which both knowledge and love flow and which itself does neither know nor love like the powers of the soul. Who knows this knows the seat of happiness. This has no before nor after nor is it expecting anything to come, for it can neither gain nor lose. It is wanting, in the sense that it knows nothing about working in itself; but, it just is itself, enjoying itself God-fashion. And in this sense I say man ought to be idle and free, all unwitting, unaware, of what God is doing in him, that is the way to be poor. According to the masters, God is being, intellectual being which knows all things. But I say, God is not being nor yet intellect nor knows not this nor that. God is exempt from all things and he is all things. Being poor in spirit means being poor of all particular knowledge, even as one who wots not anything, not God nor creature nor himself. Here there is no question of a man desiring to know or recognise the way of God. In this wise may a man be poor in knowledge of himself.

Thirdly, the poor man has nothing. It has been often said that perfection means not having the mortal things of earth, and haply this is true in one particular case, namely, when it is voluntary. But this is not the sense I mean it in. I have already

said, the poor man is not he who wants to do the will of God but he who lives in such a way as to be free from his own will and from the will of God, even as he was when he was not. Of this poverty we say, it is the deepest poverty. Secondly, we say, that man is poor who has no knowledge of God's work in him. Being as free of knowing and perceiving as God is of all things is the barest poverty. But the third poverty, the straitest I am about to tell of, *i.e.* having nothing.

Here I would remind you how I have often said, and eminent authorities have said the same, that one must be devoid of things and of activities, both inwardly and outwardly, if one would be a fitting place for God to work in. Now we say something else. Granting a man is bare of everything, of creatures, of himself, of God, yet if it is still in him to provide God with the room to work in, then we do affirm : as long as this is in the man he is not poor with the strictest poverty. God does not purpose in his work that man should have in him the place God does his work in ; poverty of spirit means freedom from God and all his works, so that if God chooses to travail in the soul he must be his own workshop, as he likes to be. Finding so poor a man, then God is his own patient and he is his own operating room, since God is in himself the operation. Here in this indigence man is obeying his eternal nature, that he has been and that he is now and that he shall be for ever.

There is the question of those words of St Paul, 'All that I am I am by the grace of God.' Here the argument soars above grace, above understanding and above desire. The answer is that St Paul's words are true; not that grace was in him; the grace of God wrought in him perfecting him to unity and then the work of grace was done. Grace having done its work there remained Paul as he was. As we should say, he was a man too poor to have or be a place for God to work in. To preserve place is to preserve distinction. Why I pray God to rid me of God is because conditionless being is above God and above distinction : it was therein I was myself, therein I willed myself and knew myself to make this man and in this sense I am my own cause, both of my nature which is eternal and of my nature which is temporal. For this am I born, and as to my birth which is eternal I can never die. In my eternal mode of birth I have always been, am now, and shall eternally remain. That which I am in time shall die and come to naught, for it is of the day and passes with the day. In my birth all things were born, and I was the cause of mine own self and all things, and had I willed it I had never been, nor any thing, and if I had not been then God had not been either. To understand this is not necessary.

One learned doctor says, his breaking-through is nobler than his emanation. When I flowed out of God then all things said, There is a God. Withal this cannot make me blest, for in it I acknowledge myself creature; but in my breaking-through, then as standing passive in the will of God, free of the will of God and all his works and eke of God himself, I transcend all creatures and am neither God nor creature: I am that I was and that I shall remain now and for ever. Then I receive an impulse which carries me above all angels. In this impulse I conceive such passing riches that I am not content with God as being God, as being all his godly works, for in this breaking-through I find that God and I are both the same. Then I am what I was, I neither wax nor wane, for I am the motionless cause that is moving all things. Now God can find no place in man, for man has gotten by his poverty that he has been eternally and ever shall abide. Here in the spirit God is one, that is the straitest poverty a man can know.

Whoso is unable to follow this discourse, let him never mind. While he is not like this truth he shall not see my argument, for it is the naked truth straight from the heart of God. May we so live as to experience it eternally. So help us God. Amen.

LXXXVIII

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Ave, gratia plena, dominus tecum! (*Luc.* 1_{28}). 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee! The Holy Ghost shall descend into thee from above, from the lofty light-throne of the eternal Father.' Here there are three things to be understood. First, the radiant nature of the angel; secondly, that he knew himself unworthy to behold God's mother; thirdly, that he was speaking not alone to her but to a goodly multitude, to every virtuous soul desiring God.

I say: had Mary not borne God in ghostly fashion first, he never had been born of her in flesh. The woman said to Christ, 'Blessed is the womb which bare thee.' To which Christ replied, 'Blessed not alone the womb which bare me: blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' It is more worth to God his being brought forth ghostly in the individual virgin or good soul than that he was born of Mary bodily.

This involves the notion of our being the only Son whom the Father has eternally begotten. When the Father begat all creatures he was begetting me; I flowed out with all creatures while remaining within in the Father. Like what I am now saying;

it springs up within me, then I pause in the idea, and thirdly I speak it out, and all of you receive it: but really it is in me all the while. So am I abiding in the Father. In the Father is the exemplar of all creatures. This exalted nature has its intellectual prototype in God. And not merely intellectual but intellect itself. The best God ever did for man was to be man himself. I will tell you a story to illustrate my point. Once upon a time there was a rich man and his wife. The lady by mischance did lose an eye whereat she grieved excessively. Then came her lord to her and said, 'O wife, why so distressed?' Quoth she, 'My lord, 'tis not my eye I mourne; I mourne for fear lest you should love me less.'—'Nay wife, I love thee,' he replied. Afterwards, not over long, he put out one of his own eyes, and going to his wife he said, 'Lady, so you may know I love you I have made myself like you: now I too have only one eye.'

According to the philosophers, creatures are all striving to bring forth and emulate the Father. Another doctor says that every active cause works solely for the sake of its result, to find rest and peace in its end. This is mankind, who scarce could credit God's great love for him till God did put out one of his own eyes by taking human nature. This was made flesh.

Said our Lady, 'How shall this be?' The angel replied, 'The Holy Ghost shall come down into thee from on high, from the lofty throne of the Father of eternal light.' *In principio.* Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.' Child in his frail humanity, Son in his eternal deity. One philosopher declares that creatures are all striving after their primitive pure nature, after their supreme perfection. Fire as fire does not burn: it is too intangible, too pure to burn at all; it is the fire-nature which will burn, infusing into the dry wood its nature and its light according to its own most high perfection. God has done the same. He has made the soul according to his own most perfect nature, pouring into her the whole of his own light in all its pristine purity, while he himself remains all undefiled.

Now you must know that I lately said: When God created all creatures he had surely gotten first something uncreated setting forth the general idea of creatures: to wit, the spark, which is so nearly God that it is a single, impartible one, bearing the form of all creatures, formless and above form.

Yesterday in the schools there was a theological discussion. I said I was astonished at no one being able to give the solution of my question: If I am the only Son whom the Father has eternally begotten, have I eternally been Son? I say, yea and nay. Son, yes, inasmuch as the Father has eternally begotten me; not Son in my unbegotten nature. *In principio.* We are given to

understand that we are the only Son whom the Father has been bringing forth for aye out of his arcane understanding of the eternal mystery of the first beginning of his primitive light-nature which is the end of all perfection. There I have been at rest for aye, asleep in the dormant understanding of the eternal Father, immanent, unspoken. I trow, seen in that light, any bit of stick would be an angel and would be intelligent, and not alone intelligent: it would be pure intellect in that first pure nature which is the perfection of enlightenment. Out of his light-nature he has been eternally begetting me his one begotten Son in the express image of his eternal Fatherhood to the end that I may be the Father and beget him of whom I am begotten. Like one who stands before some lofty peak hailing, 'Art there?' And echo answers back, 'Art there?' He cries, 'Come forth!'—'Come forth!' the voice replies. This is what God does: he begets his Son into the summit of the soul. By the fact of his bearing his Son into me I bear him back into the Father. It was nothing else, God's virgin birth, than his getting his Son back again.

I used to wonder (it is many years ago) whether I should be asked why one blade of grass is so unlike another; and as it happened I was asked why they are so different. I said, it is more marvellous they are so much alike. One philosopher says that the blades of grass are all different owing to the superfluity of the goodness of God which he pours out abundantly into all creatures the more to show his majesty. I said it is more wonderful how much the grass-blades are alike, explaining that just as all the angels are the same in their original pure nature so all the grasses are the same and all things are identical.

I was thinking as I came along that one might here in time succeed in mastering God. Supposing I were up on high and told him, 'Come up hither,' that would be difficult. But if I said, 'Bide down below,' that would be very easy. That is what God does. If a man is lowly God is unable to withhold his goodness; he is obliged to sink himself, to pour himself, into that lowly soul, on the lowest of the lowly bestowing himself most of all and bestowing himself wholly. What God bestows is his nature, and his nature is his goodness and his goodness is his love. All joy and sorrow come from love.

I was thinking on the way as I was walking here, I should not have come were I not prepared to get wet for friendship's sake. If you have all got wet let me get wet too. Good and ill both come from love. Man should not be afraid of God. Some fear is harmful. The right sort of fear is the fear of losing God. It behoves man to love God since God loves man consummately. The masters say that all things are in travail, labouring to beget

themselves in the image of the Father. They talk of earth as fleeing from the heavens ; of her fleeing down and reaching heaven downwards ; of her escaping upwards to encounter the lowest of the heavens. Earth has no escape from heaven : flee she up or flee she down heaven still invades her, energising her, fructifying her whether for her weal or for her woe. God treats man the same : weening to escape him we run into his arms, for all corners are exposed to him. God will give birth to his Son in thee whether thou like it or loathe it ; whether thou sleepest or wakest God goes on with his work. That we have no sense of it is because our tongue is furred with the slime of creatures and possesses not the salt of divine affection. If we had godly love we should savour God and all the works God ever wrought and receive all things from God and be doing the same work as he does. In this sameness we are all his only Son.

God created the soul according to his own most perfect nature that she might be the bride of his only-begotten Son. He knowing this full well decided to go forth out of the private chamber of his eternal Fatherhood where he has slept for aye and be proclaimed abroad while inwardly abiding in the first beginning of his primitive light-nature. So lifting up the tent of his eternal glory the Son proceeded out of the Most High to go and fetch his lady whom his Father had eternally given him to wife and restore her to her former high estate. For this reason he went forth and comes leaping like a love-impassioned swain. He came forth only to return again into his chamber, into the silent darkness of his mysterious Fatherhood. He proceeded out of the supreme in order to go in again accompanied by his bride and show her the hidden mystery of his secret Godhead, where he is at peace with himself and with all creatures.

In principio signifies, in the beginning of all things. It also means the end of all things, since the first beginning is because of the last end. I trow that God himself is not at rest as being the first beginning : he is at rest where he is the end and cessation of existence, not that existence is then brought to naught : it is brought to its ultimate perfection. What is the last end ? It is the mystery of the darkness of the eternal Godhead which is unknown and never has been known and never shall be known. Therein God abides to himself unknown, and the light of the eternal Father has been shining there for aye, and the darkness does not comprehend the light. May we find this truth, So help us the truth whereof we speak. Amen.

LXXXIX[1]

1. THE WORD OF GOD

Christ said, 'Blessed is the man who hears God's Word and keeps it.' The Father himself hears nothing, sees nothing, says nothing, begets nothing excepting his own Word, and in this Word the Father sees and hears and brings forth himself, even this Word and all things, his godhood in principle and himself in nature: this Word with the same nature in another Person. Observe his mode of speech. The Father, fructifying, brings forth his own nature all at once, as understanding, in his eternal Word; not at will nor as an act of will. That which is done or spoken by the power of his will he can in that same power refrain from if he will. Not so with the Father and his eternal Word; whether he would or no he is obliged to speak his Word, to procreate unceasingly: this is rooted, so to say, in the Father-nature as deeply as the Father is himself. The Father speaks his Word then, willingly but not from will, naturally, not from nature. In this Word the Father speaks my and thy and every individual human soul as this same Word. In this utterance thou and I are the natural Son of God like the Word itself. As I have already said, the Father knows nothing but this Word and himself and all divine nature and all things in this Word, and everything he knows therein is like the Word and is the Word itself in nature and in truth.

When the Father gives thee, reveals to thee, this gnosis, he is giving thee his life, his being and his deity, really and truly, all together. The human father shares his nature with his son but not his life or being. You can prove this by the fact that if the father dies the son may go on living or the son may die and the father go on living. With a common life and being they would live or die together. They are separate individuals as regards their life and being, and in this they differ from the heavenly Father and his Son. If I take a light from one place and put it in another these lights, as lights, are separate things, for one may go on burning while the other has gone out, and *vice versa*. Thus they are neither one nor yet eternal.

But, as I was saying, the heavenly Father gives thee his eternal Word, and in that Word he gives thee his own life, his being and his godhood, all at once; for the Father and the Word are two Persons and one life, one being, undivided. When the Father finds thee mentally seeing into this same light, this light itself in its own proper nature, as he sees himself and all things in his paternal power in his Word this very Word in utterance and in

[1] Fragment. Pfeiffer's text seems to be a compound of several sermons.

truth, then he gives to thee the power of begetting, with himself, thyself and all things and his own power in the shape of this same Word. Then with the Father thou art ever giving birth to thyself and all things in the here and now. In this light, as I have said, the Father sees no difference between thee and him; no more inequality, whether more or less, than between himself and his own Word. For in this light the Father and the soul and all things and the Word itself are one.

2. THE WORD OF THE SOUL[1]

—Which of the words my soul speaks is most like the eternal Word?

—There are two words which most fully reveal the eternal Word as well as the love that flows therefrom, so St Augustine says. One word is the Word of God and the other is the word of herself which the soul speaks.

—How does she speak the Word of God?

—See, God is in all things, therefore God is also in thy memory; and when the soul in her understanding gives birth to the image of God, as it lies in her memory, then God is the word of thy soul, and when this word proceeds into the will it becomes love therein. Thus God Father is in thy memory and God Word in thy intellect and God Spirit in thy love, though but one God.

—May we say then, generally, that God speaks his own Word in the soul?

—Yes, for when God speaks his Word in himself the Word acquires true distinction of Person; but when our heart speaks the Word of God from memory, the word spoken by God does not acquire true distinction of real Persons, it is only a likeness and reflection of the eternal Word.

—When the Word of God is born in him and his memory speaks this Word, how can it be said: God speaks his Word in the soul?

—To say, God speaks his Word in the soul is true; and to say the soul speaks this Word in her intellect is also true, for God and man speak the Word of God together in our life. As a woman cannot bear her child before she has conceived it, so memory must first be big with the child she bears.

XC

ELIZABETH'S FULL TIME CAME

Elizabeth impletum est tempus pariendi et peperit filium (*Luc.* 1_{57}). 'Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered and

[1] See Greith, p. 102.

she brought forth a son and called him John. Then said the people, What manner of child shall this be, for the hand of the Lord is with him.' One scripture says, 'The greatest gift is that we are God's child': that he begets his Son in us. The soul who is God's child, in whom the Son of God is born, in her shall nothing else be brought to birth. God's ultimate purpose is birth. He is not content until he brings his Son to birth in us. Nor is the soul content until the Son of God is born in her. It is thence grace springs. Grace is infused therein, grace doing nothing: its work is its becoming. It flows out of the essence of God and into the essence of the soul, not into her powers.

When the time was fully come grace was born. Time is fulfilled when time is done. He who in time has his heart established in eternity and in whom all temporal things are dead, in him is the fullness of time. 'Rejoice in God all the time,' says St Paul. He rejoices all the time who rejoices above time and apart from time. Three things prevent a man from knowing God at all. The first is time, the second body, and the third is multiplicity or number. As long as these three things are in me God is not in me nor is he working in me really. St Augustine says, 'Because the soul is greedy, because she wants to have and hold so much, therefore she reaches into time and, snatching at the things of time and number, loses what she already has.' While there is more and less in thee God cannot dwell nor work in thee. These things must go out for God to come in; except thou have them in a higher, better way: multitude summed up to one in thee. Then the more of multiplicity the more there is of unity, for the one is changed into the other.

I said on one occasion, unity unifies multiplicity but multiplicity unites not unity. Once having gotten over things, everything in us raised up to a higher power, we shall never be cast down. If I minded God and God alone, had nothing over me but God, then nothing would be hard and surely nothing troublesome. St Augustine says, 'Lord, when I turn to thee, all hardship, suffering and toil are taken from me.' Once gotten beyond time and temporalities we are free and joyous all the time; then is the fullness of time, then the Son of God is born in thee. I once said that in the fullness of time God sent his Son. If aught is born in thee except the Son thou hast gotten nothing of the Holy Ghost and neither is grace working in thee. The origin of the Holy Ghost is the Son. Were there no Son there would be no Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost does not proceed, it cannot blossom forth, except where the Father is in travail with his Son. Then he gives him all he has, natural and essential. It is in this giving that the holy Breath wells out. And it is God's intention to give

himself entirely to us. As fire, to consume the wood must penetrate the wood, finding the wood unlike. That is a matter of time. First it makes it warm, then hot, then it smokes and crackles, on account of its unlikeness ; and the hotter the wood grows the quieter and stiller it becomes, and the liker to the fire the more peaceful it becomes till at last it turns to fire altogether. For fire to consume the wood there must be no unlikeness.

In truth, which is God, if thou intendest aught but God or seekest aught but God alone, the work thou doest is not thine nor is it God's. Thy intention in thy work that also is thy work. That which energises in me is my father and I am subordinate to him. It is impossible in nature that one should have two fathers : in nature one father is the rule. When other things are all fulfilled and done with, then there is this birth. A thing that fills is everywhere in contact with its boundary, nowhere falling short ; it has length, breadth, height and depth. If it had height and no length, breadth or depth it would not fill. St Paul says, ' Pray that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the height, breadth, length and depth.'

These three things stand for three kinds of knowledge. The first is sensible. The eye sees from afar what is outside it. The second is rational and is a great deal higher. The third corresponds to an exalted power of the soul, a power so high and noble it is able to see God face to face in his own self. This power has naught in common with naught, it knows no yesterday or day before, no morrow or day after (for in eternity there is no yesterday or morrow) : therein it is the present now ; the happenings of a thousand years ago, a thousand years to come, are there in the present and the antipodes the same as here. This power descries God in his vestibule. ' In him, over him, through him,' says the scripture. *In* means, in the Father ; *over* him is in the Son ; *through* him, in the Holy Ghost. There is no truth but contains the whole of truth, as St Augustine says. This power knows all things in the truth. From this power nothing is veiled. According to the scriptures, men's heads should be bare, the women's covered. The women are the lower powers, which are veiled. The man is the power which is bare and face to face.

' What wonders shall come from this child ? ' Speaking lately to some people who are very likely here to-day, I said, nothing is so hidden but it shall be revealed. All that is naught shall be done away, hidden and not thought of any more. We shall know nothing of naught, shall have nothing in common with naught. All creatures are a mere naught. That which is not here or there, which is an oblivion of all creatures, that is fullness of being. I told them how nothing that is in us shall be hid, that we shall

disclose and give up to God everything we find within ourselves, willing or unwilling, good or bad, whatever we are prone to we shall die to in the truth. If we discover everything to God he shall discover to us in return everything he has : he shall hide from us in truth absolutely nothing of all that he has gotten, not wisdom, truth nor holiness nor deity nor nothing whatsoever. As God lives this is in truth the case. If we disclose nothing to him, no wonder if he reveals nothing to us : we must both do the same, as we to him so he to us.

It is lamentable how some people think themselves so far advanced, so one with God, although they have not yet abandoned self at all but hug themselves, like trivial things, in fortune and misfortune. They are precious far from what they think. They are full of notions and intentions. I sometimes say, if a man who seeks nothing finds nothing, what right has he to complain ? After all, he has found what he sought. To seek or purpose aught is to seek or purpose naught and to pray for aught is to get nothing. But a man with no ulterior motive, who sets his mind on God and God alone, to that man God unbosoms himself wholly and gives him all the things concealed within his heart and for his very own as they are God's own, no more nor less, provided he is after God and not things in between. What wonder if a sick man does not relish meat and wine ? He cannot taste the meat and wine ; his tongue wherewith he tastes is covered with a coating which is nasty and bitter by reason of the sickness of the man : he does not taste the proper flavour, everything tastes bitter. He is right : things are rendered bitter by means and hindrances. When the hindrance is removed he tastes things properly. As long as there is anything between, God will never taste like himself to us and life will seem very hard and bitter.

I once said that virgins follow the lamb wherever it goes, close behind. Some are virgins, some are not, whatever they appear. Wherever this lamb goes the virgins follow, some only while it leads them in the pleasant places that they like. When it takes them into suffering, travail and discomfort they turn back and refuse to follow, and these are not virgins for all they seem to be. Some say, Lord, I want to go in honour, riches, comfort. Well, if the lamb has led you by that way I wish you well in following his footsteps. True virgins will follow the lamb through the highways and byways, whithersoever it may lead, and have no pity on themselves, befall what may. 'In the fullness of time there was born John,' that is, grace, as I have explained. May all things be fulfilled in us and grace be born in us, So help us God. Amen.

XCI

REJOICE O HEAVENS

Laudate cœli et exultet terra (*Is.* 49_{13}). *Ego sum lux mundi* (*Joh.* 8_{12}). I quote two Latin texts: one from the lesson, the words of Isaiah the prophet, 'Rejoice, O heavens and earth, God hath comforted his people and will have mercy on his poor ones.' The other comes out of the gospel. Our Lord's saying, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me walketh not in darkness; he shall find and have the light of life.'

First take the words of the prophet, 'Rejoice, O heavens and earth.' Verily, verily, by God, by God and as God liveth, at the least good deed, the least good will, the least good desire, all the saints in heaven as well as all the angels rejoice with such great joy as all the joys of this world cannot equal. With the saints, the higher the more joyful, and all their joy combined is but a speck to the delight that God takes in this act. God plays and laughs in this good work, whereas all other works, those which redound not to God's glory, are dust and ashes in God's sight. Therefore he cries, 'Ye heavens, rejoice! God has comforted his people.'

Consider the words, 'God has comforted his people and will have mercy on his poor.' 'His poor,' he says. The poor are left to God alone, for no one troubles about them. Anyone who has a friend, a poor one, if he does not forget him and if he has possessions and is wise, will say 'Thou art my servant,' and he is soon forgot; but to the beggar he will fling, 'God guard thee,' and be ashamed of him. The poor are left to God: wherever they go they may come upon God and have God in all places; God takes them in charge, for they are abandoned to him. Wherefore he says in the gospel, 'Blessed are the poor.'

Now take the words, 'I am the light of the world.' 'I am,' that touches the essence. According to philosophers, all creatures can say 'I,' for the word is common property; but the word *sum, am,* none can really say but God alone. *Sum* signifies one thing which is big with good things as a whole, and it is denied to creatures that any one of them should have all human consolation. If I had my heart's desire but my finger hurt me, then I should have it not, for with a wounded finger, while it hurts me, I lack entire comfort. Bread comforts a man when he is hungry, whereas if he is thirsty bread will give him no more comfort than a stone; and the same with clothes, when he is cold, but being hot no clothes will comfort him; and this applies to creatures, hence all creatures have a certain bitterness of heart. True, creatures have this

comfort for their souls, that none can deprive them of their rights. Their property is all in God whatever possessions they may have in creatures. As it is written in the Book of Wisdom, 'In thee all good belongs to my soul.' Creature comfort is imperfect, it has innate defect. But God's comfort is complete, with no shortcoming; it is whole and perfect and he needs must give it thee, for he cannot work unless he gives thee himself first. God is foolishly in love with us, it seems he has forgotten heaven and earth and all his happiness and deity, his entire business seems with me alone, to give me everything to comfort me; he gives it to me suddenly, he gives it to me wholly, he gives it to me perfect, he gives it all the time and he gives it to all creatures.

'He that followeth me walketh not in darkness.' Philosophers attribute three powers to the soul. The first power ever seeks the sweetest. The second ever seeks the highest. The third one ever seeks the best, and the soul is too noble ever to rest anywhere but in her source whence drops what goodness is made out of. Behold, so sweet God's consolation, all creatures go in quest of him, hunting after him. Nay, I say more: it is creature's life and being, this searching after God, this hunting for him.

Peradventure ye will say, Where is this God all creatures are in quest of and whence they get their being and their life? (Fain would I speak of the Godhead whence comes all our happiness.) The Father says, 'Son, this day do I beget thee in the reflection of the saints.' Where is this God? Where the saints leave off there I begin. Where is this God? In the Father. Where is this God? In eternity. No man ever found God. As the wise man says, 'Lord, thou art a hidden God.' Where is this God? Suppose a man in hiding and he stirs, he shows his whereabouts thereby and God does the same. No one could ever have found God; he gave himself away. One of the saints has said, 'I sometimes experience such sweetness in me that, forgetting creatures altogether, I dissolve right into thee. But when I try to embrace thee Lord, lo, thou art fled. What wouldst thou then? Why draw me on only to run away? If thou dost love me wherefore dost thou shun me? Nay, Lord, it is to make me more eager to obtain.' The prophet says, 'my God.'—'Who told thee that I am thy God?'—'Lord, I cannot rest except in thee, I have no well-being but in thee.' May we thus seek God and also find him, So help us God. Amen.

XCII

GOD-PARENTS AND GOD-CHILDREN

Posui vos ut eatis et fructum afferatis (*Joh.* 15_{16}). Christ said to his disciples, 'I have set you to go and bring forth fruit.' God spake to them and to us all who are in darkness. Being in the dark we need a light to walk by. But Christ says: 'I am the light of the world.' If we keep in the true love of our head we shall be lighted by Christ. For a taper goes on burning at the tip in virtue of its contact with the flame which consumes the matter it supplies and changes it into itself.

Observe. When Christ said to his disciples, 'I have set you to go,' he referred to our being taken up into the light of grace. The prophet says, 'I was sitting when he took me up into himself.' Sitting, we stop groping and, in the light, can see our way. To wit, the way of virtue. That is the meaning of Christ's words, 'I have set you to go.' Sitting is not going. We cannot go the right way without first sitting in the light of contemplation and making out the way to take; all our works must be a light to lighten our neighbour's darkness.

Now Dionysius says: 'These, who have thus gone out of themselves and are living in the light of truth, these (I say) are the christened, they are god-children and godfathers.' Bishop Albertus expounds this as follows: God-children are they who, reading or hearing the holy scriptures read, take them to heart and show them forth in good works whereby they ultimately find the truth in God. The christened again are dead in God, there is no longer anything alive in them but God. As St Paul says, 'We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.' But the most perfect of all are the godfathers, who are drowned in the unfathomableness of God; not only does God live in them but they are alive in God and there is now in them the beginning of eternal life.

Consider now those who are god-children. Comprehending the scriptures in the light of faith they come into the dew of grace and in this gracious dew inhale the fragrance of the path of life eternal. As saith the Bride in the Book of Love, 'Take me along with thee, out in thy desert, within in thy fastness.' Out in the desert means detached from creatures; the inner fastness is the subjective certainty of truth which neither life nor death can alter. Such are these god-children, sons of power and wisdom and goodness. To them our Lord cries in the Book of Love, 'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!' The shoes being the holy life put on the feet of love and knowledge in the desire to walk

therein. But the christened are in mystical union with God and are actually leading the life of God. What shall I say of these? In their eating and drinking, their sleeping and their entire wont there is nothing found but God, did we but know it. Burn them, they yield but the test of divinity, the sweetness of the Holy Ghost, wherein they are gotten full of sap. But this none knoweth save the children of true light and him they dwell in, namely God. The children of darkness know it not, whose hearts are filled with the poison of everlasting death. Wherefore the light is turned to darkness in them and the eternal sweet to bitterness. God light us with the light we used to bask in in his Son eternally, so shall we escape from darkness into the true light!

But the third class, yclept godfathers, these climbing hill and mountain have followed the track of the true sons with will and knowledge, and the flaming heat of the Holy Ghost having burnt up all their matter, they show now only the one light in God. In this light they have come to rest, at peace after their labours, the peace of absolute consciousness, a peace which is never disturbed. Thought fails in speaking of these fathers, for they have received all good and perfect gifts from the Father of lights and have reached the goal of virtue. This goal set John, the soaring eagle, wondering in the Apocalypse. And Christ answered him, saying, 'I am the first without beginning and the last that has no end.' Amen.

XCIII

THE CROSSING

Exhibite membra vestra servire justitiæ in sanctificationem (*Rom.* 6_{19}). St Paul says, 'Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness, for the wages of sin is death but the reward of virtue is eternal life.' The soul has but two members to offer for service of the sort acceptable to God, these are will and understanding.

One master says, God exerts the whole force of his will in loving the soul. But my point is that God's sole object in loving the soul is to make her love him in return. Again, I contend that God devotes his divine nature to pleasing the soul, to making her like him and enjoy his society and be friendly with him and love him. Thirdly, I hold that this love which comes up in the ground of the soul, sprouting out of the ground of the Godhead, that this (I say) is the self-same love wherewith God loves his one-begotten Son, and nothing less. And fourthly, if so be that man is planted in God as he is in creature, then I maintain it is in the very ground

of the Holy Ghost's being and becoming, the very ground where the Holy Ghost is coming out in blossom.

St Paul does well to say, 'Yield your members.' For intellect, albeit natural, is too exalted to be moved by mundane things. Yet, rendered to the source whence it proceeded forth it is absorbed in God, and that which absorbs it it becomes. Will, that is will proper, is as such omnipotent. But thousands die without acquiring this genuine will. Doubtless they had desires and inclinations like other animals. One man does something trifling, does it just once and sends it on the wings of praise and thankfulness up to its source. Another one does some important work which occupies him long and constantly, and yet this little thing done once is more acceptable to God than the other man's great work which cost him so much time and trouble. Why? I will tell you. Because the trivial act was carried up past time into the now of eternity, therefore it was to God's entire satisfaction. Though one should live through all the time from Adam and all the time to come before the judgment day doing good works, yet he who, energising in his highest, purest part, crosses from time into eternity, verily in the sight of God this man conceives and does far more than anyone who lives throughout all past and future time, because this now includes the whole of time.

One master says that in this crossing over time into the now, each power of the soul will surpass itself. The five powers must pass into her collective power (or common sense), and common sense will vanish into the formless power wherein nothing forms. Intellect and will are transcended. True, grace is a creature, but by no means altogether. The soul has no inherent grace excepting in her ground, and above this ground of the soul grace is indigenous. Therein grace does nothing, although it is effective in the uses of her powers; but in the ground of the soul grace, happiness and God's ground are one and the same life wherein God is living. There the power behind the eye is as noble as the understanding; there foot and eye rank equal. What the soul is in her ground has never been determined. But Paul says, 'The grace of God is eternal life.' Paul also says, 'The wages of sin is death.' The deaths men die are all of them as nothing to the death of the soul who is divorced from God, from which may God preserve us. Amen.

XCIV

THE SOUL

St Paul says, 'Put off self, put on Christ.' In abandoning ourself we initiate Christ and holiness and happiness and are ennobled.

The prophet marvelled at two things. First, at God's doings with the sun and moon and stars. And secondly he marvelled at the soul, at the prodigious things God does and has done with her and for her sake, yet do what prodigies he may she still preserves the absolute dispassion which befits one of her noble lineage. Mark the nobility of her descent. I make a letter of the alphabet like the image of that letter in my mind, not like my mind itself. And so with God. God makes things in general like the universal image of them in himself, not like himself. Certain things he has specially made like emanations of his own, such as goodness, wisdom and other so-called attributes of God. But the soul he has made not merely like the image in himself nor like anything proceeding from himself that is predicated of him, but he made her like himself, nay, like he is, all told : like his nature, his essence, his emanating-immanent activity, his ground wherein he is subsisting in himself, wherein he is begetting his alone-begotten Son and where the Holy Ghost comes into flower : in the likeness of his in-dwelling out-going work did God make the soul.

It is a law of nature that fluids run downhill into anything adapted to receive them ; the higher not receiving from the lower but the lower from the higher. Now God is higher than the soul, and hence there is a constant flow of God into the soul, which cannot miss her. The soul may well miss it, but as long as a man keeps right under God he immediately catches this divine influence straight out of God. Nor is he subject to aught else, not fear nor pain nor pleasure nor anything that is not God. Put thyself therefore right under God and thou shalt receive his inflowing divinity wholly and solely. The soul does not receive from God as from a stranger, as the air does the light of the sun, which it takes as a foreign intrusion. The soul receives her God not as a stranger nor as inferior to God, for inferior is both different and distant.

Philosophers say the soul receives as a light from the light, wherein is nothing foreign or remote. There is something in the soul wherein God simply is, and according to philosophers this is a nameless thing and has no proper name. It neither has nor is a definite entity, for it is not this or that nor here nor there ; what it is it is from another wherewith it is the same ; the one streams into it and it into the one. Hence the exhortation ' Enter into God in holiness,' for here is the source of the soul's whole life and being. This (light) is wholly in God and her other without him, so in this one the soul is ever in God, provided she smother it not and extinguish it in her.

Philosophers say this (light) is present in God and never goes out in him and God is ever in it. I say, God has ever been in it

and of it eternally. The union of man and God is not a matter of grace (for grace is creature and creature has nothing to do with it), except in the ground of divinity, where the three Persons are one in nature and it (grace) is that nature itself. Wherefore an thou wilt, God and the universe are thine. That is, if thou wilt put off self and things : doff the habit of thy personality and take thyself in thy divinity.

The philosophers say that human nature has nothing to do with time ; that it is deeper-seated and more firmly rooted in a man than he is in himself. God took on human nature and united it with his own Person. Thus human nature was God who donned man's nature only, not any individual man. Would'st thou be very Christ and God ? Put off, then, whatever the eternal Word did not put on. The eternal Word never put on a person. So do thou strip thyself of everything personal and selfish and keep just thy bare humanity ; thus thou shalt be to the eternal Word exactly what his human nature is to him. Thy human nature is no different from his : they are identical : what it is in him it is in thee. And hence I said at Paris that every prophecy of holy scripture is fulfilled in the just man ; for being perfect, the whole promise of the old and new testaments is accomplished in thee.

How to be perfect ? There are two aspects of the question. The prophet says, ' In the fullness of time the Son was sent.' Now fullness of time is of two kinds. In the first place a thing is fulfilled when it is done, as day is done at eventide. So when time drops from thee thy time is fulfilled. Again, time is fulfilled when it is finished, that is, in eternity. Time ends when there is no before and after : when all that is is here and now and thou seest at a glance all that has ever happened and shall ever happen. Here there is no before nor after ; everything is present, and in this immediate vision I possess all things. This is the perfection of time, and I am perfect and I am truly the only Son and Christ. May we attain to this fullness of time. So help us God. Amen.

XCV

BUT NOW THE LIGHT IN GOD

Eratis enim aliquando tenebræ, nunc autem lux in domino (*Ephes.* 5_8). St Paul says, ' For ye were sometimes darkness but now the light in God.' The prophets walking in the light perceived and knew the truth umbraged in the procession of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes they were moved to return to the world and speak of things they knew to be conducive to our happiness, thinking

to teach us to know God. Whereupon they would fall dumb, becoming tongue-tied and for three reasons.

First, because the good they knew by sight in God was too immense and too mysterious to take definite shape in their understanding. Such ideas as formed were so unlike what they had seen in God, were such a travesty of the reality, that they held their peace for fear of lying. Another reason was, that what they had gotten in God rivalled God's very self in its immensity and sublimity and yielded no idea nor any form for them to express. Thirdly, they were dumb because the hidden truth they saw in God, the mystery they found there, was ineffable. So it befell from time to time that, coming back and speaking of these things, they slipped, through lapses from the truth, into gross matter and tried to teach us to know God by means of infernal creature things.

Paul says, ' but now the light in God.' *Aliquando*, to those who are instructed, is the same as *when* and expresses time, which is what keeps the light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time. He means not time alone but temporalities ; not only temporal things but temporal affections ; not only temporal affections but the very taint and aroma of time ; for as, where an apple has lain the smell lingers, so with the contact of time. According to our best authorities the visible heavens and the sun and stars have nothing to do with time beyond bare contact with it. This I cite as showing that the soul, which towers high above the heavens, has, at her very summit, no connection with time at all. Many times I have explained about the act in God, the birth wherein the Father bears his one-begotten Son whose procession causes the interior blossoming of the Holy Ghost, that the Spirit proceeds from both and that in this procession the soul comes leaping forth, the image of the Godhead being sealed into the soul in this procession ; and that in the return of the three Persons the soul goes back, re-informed into her primitive and formless form. Or as Paul puts it, ' now the light in God.' He does not say, ' Ye are the light ' but ' *now* the light.' Meaning, as I have often said, that to know things (really) we must know them in their cause. The philosophers tell us that things are suspended in their birth as in a look-out over their existence. The Father gives birth to his Son *now*. In this eternal birth wherein the Father generates his Son, the soul comes into her existence which is the image of the Godhead imprinted in her soul.

It was mooted in the schools and maintained by some of the professors, that God imprints his image in the soul as a picture is painted upon canvas, and it fades. This was refuted. Others suggested with more truth, that God leaves in the soul a permanent

impression of the nature of an abiding intention, as thus : my wish of to-day is my purpose of to-morrow, the idea of which is kept alive by my actual thinking of it, just as, they said, God's works are done. For if the carpenter were perfect at his work he would not need materials : he would no sooner think a house than, lo, it would be made. And so with works in God : he thinks them and behold they are.

Then came a third professor who spoke most truly of them all. He pointed out that yonder no work is done at all : it is the now, being without becoming, newness without renewing, and this existence is his essence. God's content is too subtile for renewal. And also in the soul there is a subtile nature too fine and rare to be renewed. In God it is all the here and now ; unrenewable.

There are four points I had intended to discuss : the subtile nature of God, the subtile nature of the soul, the work of God and the work of the soul. These I must leave over for the present.

XCVI

RIDDANCE

Qui audit me non confundetur (*Eccl.* 24_{30}). The eternal wisdom of the Father says, ' He that heareth me is not ashamed. (If he is ashamed he is ashamed of his shame.) He that worketh in me does not sin. He that reveals me and fears me shall have everlasting life.' I will consider first these words of the eternal wisdom, ' He that heareth me is not ashamed (or, confounded).' To hear the eternal wisdom of the Father he must be within, at home and by himself.

Three things prevent our hearing the eternal Word. The first is body, the second number, and the third is time. If we were rid of these three things we should be living in eternity and in the spirit, solitaries in the desert listening to the eternal Word. But our Lord says, ' No man heareth my word or my teaching till he be free from self.' To hear God's Word demands absolute self-surrender. Hearer and heard are one in the eternal Word. The subject the eternal Father teaches is his essence, his nature, his whole godhood, which he divulges to us altogether in his Son, teaching us to be the Son himself.

A man who has gone out of himself and is the only-begotten Son owns what is proper to the only Son. God's work and teaching are all done in his Son. God works with the sole object of getting us to be his only Son. As soon as he perceives that we are his only Son, God makes for us impetuously ; he comes well-nigh to shattering his essence, naughting his very self, in his

rash haste to show us the whole abysm of his Godhead, the fullness of his essential nature. God flies to make this ours as it is his. Here God enjoys and delights in his plenitude. And this man who is within God's love and ken is none other than what God is himself. Loving thyself thou lovest all men as thyself. While thou lovest anyone less than thine own self thou dost not love thyself in truth : not till thou lovest all men as thyself, all men in one man who is both God and man. The man who loves himself and all men as himself is righteous, absolutely just.

Sometimes people say, 'I like my friends and benefactors better than other people.' But I say that is wrong, imperfect. True, we must make shift with it as we have to do with a side wind to cross the sea : it will take us over. Like our preference for one man above another, it is natural. To love another as myself means that I would as lief his fate for good and ill, for life and death, happened to me as him, which would amount to perfect understanding.

As bearing on this subject St Paul says, 'I would I were divorced from God for ever, for God and for my friends' sake.' And as you know, to leave God for an instant is to leave God eternally and to leave God at all is hell torment. What does St Paul mean then by wishing to be divorced from God ? Doctors debate whether St Paul was upon the way to his perfection or whether he was perfect ? I say he was perfect, otherwise he could not have said this.

I will put into plain words what St Paul means by wishing to depart from God. Man's last and highest leave-taking is leaving God for God. St Paul left God for God : he left everything he could give or take of God, every concept of God. In leaving these he left God for God since God remained to him in his essential self ; not as a concept of himself, nor yet as an acquired thing, but God in his essential actuality. This is no case of give and take between himself and God : it is the one and perfect union. Here man is the true man whom suffering can no more befall than it can befall the divine essence, for, as I have said before, there is something in the soul so nearly kin to God that it is one and not united. It is one ; it has naught in common with naught and is naught to aught. Anything created is naught. It is remote and alien from creature. If man were wholly this he would be wholly uncreated and uncreaturely ; if everything temporal were so, were comprehended in this one, it would be nothing else than the unity itself. Were I to find myself but for a single instant in this case, I should esteem myself of no more moment than a worm.

God gives to everything alike, and as flowing forth from God

things are all equal; angels, man and creatures all proceed from God alike in their first emanation. To take things in their primal emanation is to take them all alike. If here in time they are alike, in God in eternity they are much more so. Any flea as it is in God is nobler than the highest of the angels in himself. Things are all the same in God : they are God himself.

God delights so in this likeness that he pours out his whole nature, his whole substance into it, in his own self. The joy and satisfaction of it are ineffable. It is like a horse turned loose in a lush meadow giving vent to his horse-nature by galloping full-tilt about the field: he enjoys it, and it is his nature. And just in the same way God's joy and satisfaction in his likes finds vent in his pouring out his entire nature and his being into this likeness, for he is this likeness himself.

It is a question whether those angels who are dwelling here with us to serve and guard us have less likeness in their joys than the ones abiding in eternity : is it in any sense a drawback to them to be serving and protecting us? No, not at all. Their joy is undiminished, so is too their likeness ; for the work of the angels is the will of God and the will of God is the work of the angels. Neither in their joy, their likeness nor their work are these angels handicapped. If God should bid an angel go pick the caterpillars off a tree, the angel would obey him readily, nay, since it is God's will it would be his happiness.

Being established in God's will, a man will want what is God and what is God's will and nothing else. If he is sick he will not be wanting to be well. To him all pain is pleasure, multitude is pure and single, provided he is really in the will of God. Aye, though it were the pains of hell it would be joy and happiness to him. He has left himself and he is free, passive to all impressions. My eye can see colour because it is free to be coloured. When I see blue or white, my eye which is seeing the colour is taking the colour that it sees. The eye wherein I see God is the same eye wherein God sees me : my eye and God's eye are one eve, one vision, one knowing, one love.

Man being thus in the love of God is dead to self and all created things, and no more mindful of himself than one a thousand miles away. This man abides in likeness, in unity, and there is no unlikeness in him. This man has left the world and himself as well. Supposing some man owned the world and for God's sake gave it up just as he had gotten it, then God would give him back the world and eternal life to boot. And if there were a second man possessing merely the good will, who thought: Lord were this whole world mine, nay two of them (or any number he may choose), I would resign it and myself as well, entire as I received it from

thee : him would God recompense no less than if it had been given by his hand. Another man with nothing to resign, bodily or ghostly, would be the most resigned of all. He who for one instant wholly resigns self, to him shall all be given. To leave himself for twenty years and then to have self back again, an instant, is never to have left himself at all. He who both has and is resigned, nor ever casts one glance at what he has resigned but remains firm and unshaken and motionless in himself, that man is free. May we remain steadfast and immoveable, like the eternal Father, So help us God and his eternal Wisdom. Amen.

XCVII

DIVES

Homo quidam erat dives etc. (*Luc.* 16_{19}). 'There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day and he had no name.'

This will equally apply to the causeless Deity and to the loving soul. 'There was a rich man.' *Man* means a rational entity. A heathen philosopher says, 'By man in the scriptures we mean God.' And St Gregory says, if there were in God one thing nobler than another we should say it is his understanding ; for in understanding God is manifested to himself; in understanding God is proceeding in himself; in understanding God is proceeding forth into all things. Were there no understanding in God there would be no Trinity and no emanation of creatures.

He had no name. And so is the threefold nature of God nameless ; such names as the soul gives him are gotten of her own understanding. As the heathen philosopher says in his book, *The Light of Lights*, 'God is superessential and super-rational and unintelligible,' that is, to the natural understanding. I speak not of gracious understanding, for by grace we may be brought to know as much as St Paul did, who was caught up into the third heaven where he saw those things that he neither would nor could express. He could not express them as he saw them, for when we know a thing we know it either in its cause or in its mode or by its activity. God remains unknown because he is the first (*i.e.* he has no cause), he is unconditioned (*i.e.* unknowable) and he is inactive (in his hidden stillness). He is without the names that are applied to him. Moses enquired his name. God answered and said, '*He who is* hath sent thee.' He could not understand it in any other form. God as he is in himself he cannot give creatures to understand, not that he cannot do it but creature cannot understand. As

the heathen philosopher says, 'God is beyond nature, beyond praise, beyond reason and beyond understanding.'

'This man was rich.' And so is God rich in himself and in all things. Mark the plenitude of God. It is fivefold. First, he is the prime cause, so he pervades all things.—Next, he is essentially one, so he is universal.—Thirdly, he is the fountain-head, so he is flowing into all things.—Fourthly, he is unchangeable, so he is most desirable.—Fifthly, he is perfect, so he is most incomprehensible.

Being the first cause he imparts himself. As the heathen philosopher observes, 'The First Cause pours into causes in general more than these secondary causes pour into their causes.' Again, he is indivisible. Bishop Albertus says a thing is impartible which is intrinsically one without a second. And the sum of all partibles amounts to what he is. In him creatures are one in the same, they are God in God. In themselves they are naught.—Thirdly, being the fountain-head he is overflowing into all things. Bishop Albertus says: 'Into things in general he flows in three ways: in being, in life and in light; and into the rational soul in particular as the potentiality of all things, the bringing back of creatures to their original source.' To wit, the light of lights: 'All gifts and perfections flow from the Father of lights,' as St James says.—Fourthly, being unchangeable he is most comfortable. Here note that God unites with things while keeping his intrinsic oneness, and all things are one in him. Hence Christ's words, 'Ye shall be turned into me and I into you.' Owing to his unchangeableness and the littleness of creatures. For as the prophet says, all things are to God as a drop to the ocean. And as the drop becomes the ocean not the ocean the drop so the soul imbibing God turns into God, not God into the soul. There the soul loses her name, her power and her activity but not her existence. The soul abides in God as God is abiding in himself. Anent which Bishop Albertus declares that the will a man dies in he abides in eternally.—Fifthly, being perfect he is most incomprehensible. God is self-perfect and omni-perfect. What is perfection in God? It means that he is brim-full of himself and is the sole good of all things. And because he is good he is the desired of all things.

XCVIII

HE WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN

Videus Jesus turbas ascendit in montem etc. (*Matt.* 5_1). We read in the gospel that our Lord departed from the multitude and ascended into the mountain. There he opened his mouth and taught them about the kingdom of God.

St Augustine says, 'The student of this subject sets his stool in heaven.' The student of God must rise above things scattered: these he must eschew. To take in God's instruction he must gather himself together and withdraw into himself, turning his back on care and the pursuit of nether things and on his powers so many and so various. He must leave all these behind, even as existing in his thought, not but what thought works wonders in itself. These thoughts must be transcended if God is to speak into the powers which are inseparate.

Again: 'He went up into the mountain' implies that God is imparting the sublimity and sweetness of his nature. In this intuition wherein there must needs fall away everything that is creature, he is aware of nothing but God and himself as the image of God.

Thirdly: his ascent into the mountain betokens his exaltation (what is high is near to God) and concerns the powers trenching on divinity. Upon one occasion our Lord took three of his disciples and led them up into a mountain where he appeared before them in that same light-body wherein we shall see him in eternal life. Our Lord said to the children of Israel, 'Remember what I told you about heaven: ye see there neither image nor form nor any likeness.' When a man does leave the multitude God comes into his soul without image or likeness.

St Augustine teaches about three kinds of knowledge. The first is bodily: the eye, for instance, is sensible of images. The second is mental but still admits of images of bodily things. The third is in the interior mind, which knows without image or likeness, and this knowledge is like unto the angels.

The higher angels are divided into three. One philosopher says: 'The soul knows only in effigy. Things are all known in image and likeness, but angels know themselves without likeness, and God.' What he means to say is: God imparts himself to the soul at her summit without image or likeness.

He went up into the mountain and was transfigured before them. The soul must be transfigured or re-formed and sealed and re-cast in his form. I maintain that the soul transcends form, she being cast in the form of God's Son. According to the masters, the Son is the image of God and the soul is formed in his image. I agree. But the Son is the image of God above form: the form of his concealed Godhead: the Son as the idea, as the conception of God, that is the form of the soul. By the fact that the Son loves the soul loves also. Where the Son is proceeding is not where the soul is suspended: she is above form. Fire and heat are one and yet far from the same. Taste and hue in an apple are one but by no means identical. The tongue can

taste things which are lost on the eye ; the eye perceives colours the tongue knows not of. The soul knows one only ; she is above form.

The prophet says : ' God will lead his sheep into green pastures. *Sheep* is in the singular : and so are they singular who are simplified to one. A philosopher says, that nowhere is the heavenly course so plain as in the simple hearts who guilelessly accept the heavenly influence and in children with no mind of their own. The clever and active-minded people are carried away into multitudinous things. Our Lord promises to feed his sheep in the primitive mountain pastures, on green grass. In God all creatures are in embryo. First, all creatures sally forth from God and then the angels. To have the nature of one particular creature is to bear the stamp of creatures as a whole. An angel's nature bears the impress of all creatures. All that angelic nature can receive is summed up in him. Whatever God chooses to create his angels entertain on penalty of missing the perfection which belongs to other creatures.

St Augustine says : What God creates has a channel through the angels on high, where on the hill-tops everything is flourishing, where creatures are all fresh and green. Falling into time they droop and fade. Among the young green of all creatures there our Lord pastures his sheep. Creatures which flourish on these verdant heights are, as existing in the angels, more grateful to the soul than all the things of this world. The vilest of creatures as it is there, is to this world as day to night.

Whoever would be taught by God has to ascend this mountain ; there God will perfect them in the day of eternity when the light is full. What I perceive in God is light ; what touches creatures is darkness. The true light has no contact with creatures. Spiritual perception is light. St John says, ' God is the true light that shineth in the darkness.' What is the darkness ? In the first place : independence, detachment : being blind and unaware of creatures. As I have frequently said : to see God we have to be blind. Again, God is the light which shines in the darkness. He is the blinding light. That is, light incomprehensible, illimitable, that knows no end. Its blinding the soul means that she knows nothing, is aware of nothing. The third darkness is best of all : there is no light. A master says, ' Heaven has no light, it is too high up for that ; it does not shine and in itself is neither hot nor cold.' In this darkness the soul has lost all light, she has outgrown what we call light and colour.

A philosopher says : ' Light is the Supreme, God's promised land.' A philosopher says : ' The realization of every desire is brought to the soul in this light.' A philosopher says : ' There never was anything subtile enough to enter the ground of the soul

but God only.' Meaning to say: God shines in that darkness where the soul transcends all light. For what though her powers are open to sweetness and light and grace yet into the ground of the soul she lets nothing but absolute God. Whatever besides of sweetness and light proceeds from him she receives merely into her powers.

According to our best authorities the powers of the soul and she herself are one: fire and fire-light are one, and where it (light) changes to reason it changes to another nature. Where intellect issues from the soul it invents another nature. Thirdly, the light of lights where soul transcends all light is on the mountain summit where no light exists. Where God breaks out into his Son is not where the soul hangs from. Where God is proceeding, we knowing God somewhat, is not where the soul is suspended, it is infinitely higher up than that; she transcends light and knowledge completely. He says, 'I will deliver them and will gather them together and bring them into their own land where I will lead them into green pastures (upon the mountain of Israel).' Upon this mountain he opened his mouth. One doctor says: 'Our Lord opens his mouth here below leading us by the scriptures and by means of creatures.' But St Paul says, 'Now hath God spoken to us in his only-begotten Son in whom I know from the least to the greatest all at once in God.' May we out-grow whatever is not God, So help us God. Amen.

XCIX

BE YE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND

Renovamini spiritu mentis vestræ (*Ephes.* 4_{23}). 'Be ye renewed in the spirit,' here called *mens* or mind. Thus speaks St Paul. Now St Augustine says that in the highest part of the soul, there known as *mens* or the mind, there was created along with the soul a capacity called by philosophers the casket or shrine of mind-forms or formless images. This power makes the Father comparable with the soul in his emanating deity whereof he has poured forth the whole hoard of divine being into the Son and into the Holy Ghost in distinction of Persons, just as the memory of the soul pours out treasure of ideas into the soul-powers. Now if with this faculty the soul sees form, whether she see the form of an angel or her own form, it is an imperfection in her. But when all forms are detached from the soul and she sees nothing but the one alone, then the naked essence of the soul finds the naked, formless essence of the divine unity, the superessential being, passive, reposing in itself. O surpassing wonder, what

lofty suffering is that, when the soul suffers nothing but the absolute unity of God !

Ye shall be renewed in the spirit, says St Paul. Renewal befalls all creatures under God ; but for God there is no renewal, only all eternity. What is eternity ?—It is characteristic of eternity that in it youth and being are the same, for eternity would not be eternal could it newly become and were not always. Now I maintain that renewal befalls the angels, that is, in their knowledge of the future, for an angel knows of future things only so much as God reveals to him. And renewal befalls the soul in so far as she is soul, and she is soul in so far as she gives life to the body and is the form of the body. And renewal befalls her too inasmuch as she is spirit. She is spirit in so far as she is detached from here and now and from everything that belongs to matter. But so far as she is the image of God and nameless as God is, no renewal befalls her but only eternity, as in God. Now mark ! God is nameless ; no one can know or say anything of him. A heathen philosopher says that what we know or predicate about the first cause is what we are ourselves rather than what the first cause is, for this transcends speech and knowledge. If I say God is good, it is not true : I am good, God is not good. I say more : I am better than God is, for what is good can be better and what is better can be best. But God is not good, therefore he cannot be better ; and since he cannot be better therefore he cannot be best. These three : good, better, best are remote from God who is above all. And if, again, I say that God is wise, it is not true : I am wiser than he. Or if I say, God is a being, it is not true : he is a transcendental essence, a superessential nothing. St Augustine says, ' The finest thing a man can say of God is that he is silent from consciousness of interior fullness.' Wherefore hold thy peace and prate not about God, for prating of him thou dost lie, committing sin. If thou wouldst be free from sin and perfect, babble not of God. Neither know anything of God, for God is beyond knowing. One philosopher says, Had I a God that I could know I would have him for my God no longer. Know'st thou of him anything ? He is no such thing, and in that thou dost know of him anything at all thou are in ignorance, and ignorance leads to the condition of the brute ; for in creatures what is ignorant is brutish. If thou wouldst not be brutish then, know nothing of the unuttered God.—' What then shall I do ? '—Thou shalt lose thy thy-ness and dissolve in his his-ness ; thy thine shall be his mine, so utterly one mine that thou in him shalt know eternalwise his is-ness, free from becoming : his nameless nothingness.

' Be ye renewed in the spirit,' says St Paul. If we have a mind

to be renewed in spirit, then those six powers of the soul, the higher and the lower, must each wear a golden finger-ring all gilded over with the gold of divine love. Consider the lower powers, which are three. The first is called reason, *rationale*; on this thou shalt wear a golden finger-ring: light, so that thy reason may be all the time timelessly irradiated with divine light. The second power is rage, *irascibilis*; on it thou shalt wear the finger-ring, thy peace. And why? Because, in peace, in God; without peace, out of God. The third power is desire, *concupiscibilis*; and on it thou shalt wear, enough, so that thou mayst have done with all creatures under God; but with God thou shalt never have done, for of God thou canst never have enough: the more thou hast of God the more thou wantest of him; couldst thou have enough of him, could *enough* ever be applied to God, God were not God.

Also on each higher power thou shalt wear a golden finger-ring. Of these higher powers there are likewise three. The first is the retentive faculty, *memoria*. This power is likened to the Father in the Trinity. On it thou shalt wear the golden finger-ring, remembrance, that all eternal things may be stored up in thee. The second one is understanding, *intellectus*. This power is likened to the Son. On this, too, thou shalt wear a golden finger-ring, perception, that thou mayst be ever apprehending God.—'In what way?'—Thou shalt know him without image, without semblance and without means.—'But for me to know God thus, with nothing between, I must be all but he, he all but me.'—I say, God must be very I, I very God, so consummately one that this he and this I are one *is*, in this is-ness working one work eternally; but so long as this he and this I, to wit, God and the soul, are not one single here, one single now, the I cannot work with nor be one with that he. The third power is will, *voluntas*. This power is likened to the Holy Ghost. On it thou shalt wear the golden finger-ring, love, that thou mayst love God. But thou shalt love God apart from loveworthiness: not because he is worthy of love, for God is unloveworthy: he is superior to love and loveworthiness.—'How then shall I love him?'—Thou shalt love God non-spiritually, thy soul must be de-spiritualised: stripped of spirituality. For while thy soul is specifically spirit, she has form; the while she has form she has neither unity nor union; the while she lacks union she has never really loved God, for actual love lies in union. Wherefore let thy soul be de-spirited of all spirit; let it be spiritless; if thou lovest God as God, as spirit, as Person or as image, that must all go.—'Then how shall I love him?'—Love him as he is: a not-God, a not-spirit, a not-Person, a not-image; as sheer, pure, limpid unity, alien from all

duality. And in this one let us sink down eternally from nothingness to nothingness. So help us God. Amen.

C

ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL

Unus deus et pater omnium, qui est super omnes et per omnia et in omnibus nobis (*Ephes.* 4_6). I am quoting St Paul's words, 'One God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in us all.' From the gospel I will take another saying, the saying of our Lord, 'Friend, go up higher.'

To begin with, when St Paul speaks of 'one God and Father of all' the omission of the particle suggests some variation from his 'one God.' God is one in himself and apart from all. God belongs to none and none belongs to him, God is one. Boëthius says, God is one and changes not. God's whole creation he created without changing. All things, once created, progress in changing. The moral of which is that we ought to be one in ourselves and wholly free from attachment. Firm and unshaken in God does it behove us to be. Out of God there is nothing but naught. No change nor movement can get into God. What seeks another place outside him, that changes. God has all things in him in one omnipotentiality; God seeks not anything outside himself, for he has got it in him in its perfection. No creature can conceive it as it is in God.

Another teacher says, 'Father of all, blessed art thou.' This too is big with change, for calling him Father he makes us his children. And if he is our Father then we as his children shall have his honour at heart. Our Lord says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' Purity of heart means separation, cleansing, from all bodily things, the isolation of the self and in this abstraction the plunging into God and being atoned with him.

David says, 'Those works are pure and guileless which are pursued and perfected in the light of the soul'; and those are yet more guileless which abide therein in the depths of the spirit and proceed not forth. 'One God and Father of all.'

The other saying, 'Friend, come up higher, take the higher seat.' I will make of twain one. 'Friend, come up higher, draw up,' is the friendly conversation of the soul with God. He says, 'Friend, draw up, come up higher,' and, answering her: one God and Father of all. A certain philosopher says, Friendship resides in the will. But so far as friendship resides in the will it does not unify. Love does not unify; true, it unites in act but not in essence. It merely says, 'One God, come up higher,

draw nigh.' Into the ground of the soul nothing enters but God himself. Even the highest angel, although he is so nigh to God and is endowed so largely with God's love (his works are established in God in one essence not one operation; he has in God an immanence, a settled habitation), this angel, strange to say, exalted though he be, is not allowed into the soul. One master lays it down that all creatures individually merit that God himself should work in them. Soul as transcending body is too virgin-exquisite to set her heart on aught save pure Deity himself. But nothing enters there until it has been shorn of all additions. That is why she was answered, ' one God.'

St Paul says, ' one God.' One is something more simple than goodness and truth. Goodness and truth are constants, they are added to (only) in thought; thinking attributes things to them. There is no addition to the one as proceeding in himself into the Son and into the Holy Ghost. He said, ' Friend, go up higher.' A master says, One is the denial of denials. If I say God is good, that is an affirmation. One is the denial of denials, the grave of expectations. What does one mean? That to which nothing is added. The soul receives Godhead as told forth in her, unadded to, unthought. One is the denial of denials. Every creature makes innate denial; the one denies it is the other; an angel denies being any other creature. But God makes the denial of denials; he is one and denies all other, for there is nothing without God. All creatures are in God; they are his very Godhead, that is to say, the fullness. He is the Father of all deity. One God, not proceeding, unmoved, unmindful of the Word. By the fact of denying God something—and by denying God goodness I am not denying God,—(I say), by denying God something I conceive something about him, that he is not; even this has to go. God is one, he is the negation of negations. According to one master, the angelic nature secretes no power nor work, it has no knowledge save of God alone. Everything else it ignores. As he says, ' one God and Father of all.'

Some of the powers of the soul take in from without, as, for example, the eye. Though it lets in but little, rejecting the great bulk, yet it is dependent on and does receive something from outside in the mode of here and now. But intelligence and intellect, paring to the core, seize what is neither here nor now. In her unconditioned state she is right in touch with nature, but she still receives from the senses; what the senses bring in from outside the intellect uses. Not so the will; in this respect will ranks above the intellect. Will accepts nothing save in abstract understanding, where there is neither here nor now. God intends to convey what a pure and exalted thing will is. It rises to

familiar colloquy with God, and God says, 'Friend, come up higher, honour waits thee.'

The will wills happiness. It has been asked, what is the difference between grace and happiness. Grace, as we are now in this life, and happiness as ours to be hereafter in eternal life, are to one another as the flower to its fruit. When the soul is brimming with grace and nothing is left her, then grace works to perfect all that exists in the soul; not that it comes to actual work, but by its mere presence in the soul what the soul does grace makes perfect. Grace does no work but, all-pouring, pours all at once into the soul. The third grace atones the soul with God. Its consummation, its effect, is to bring back the soul to God; hers, after the blossom, the fruit. Will, as the will to happiness, as the will to be with God and the actual ascent, in this singleness (of heart) God slips into the will, and the single mind seeing God as the truth, God slips into the intellect. But his entering into the will raises it up. As he says, 'one God. Friend, come up higher.' One God: God's unity is the crown of God's divinity. God could never bear his one-begotten Son were he not one. The fact of being one determines all he does creaturely and godly. Oneness belongs to God alone; God's idiosyncrasy is oneness; God must be one God or not be God at all. Divine riches or wisdom or truth, it is all the same thing in God; it is not one, it is unity. God has all he has in him; it is one with him. Theologians say that heaven revolves with the object of gathering all things in; hence its rapid motion. He said, 'Friend, come up higher, thou art honoured.' It is the honour and adornment of the soul that God is one. God behaves as though he existed for no purpose but to please the soul; as though he did adorn himself solely in order to attract the soul. And man desires now one thing now another; he cultivates now wisdom and now art. If she has nothing of the one she will never rest; (she will never rest) till she is all the same in God. God is one; that is the soul's beatitude, her ornament, her rest. A philosopher says, God orders all things in his operation. The soul is all things, and in all respects the noblest and highest and God pours in all at once; God is one.

CI

IN ALL THINGS I SEEK REST

Part I

In omnibus requiem quæsivi (*Eccles.* 24_{11}). St Augustine says, 'My soul was created by thee and for thee wherefore she is ever restless till she finds thee. In all created things, which I search

in understanding, there is no refuge for my soul, but in thee, God, alone. In the love-spring of thy substance are gathered up to one the perfections of all creatures, which in them are scattered and divided.' Were there any single creature with all creaturely perfections both in quality and number then God would not have made more than that one alone, as I have pointed out in my discourse, 'Whosoever would follow me let him take up his cross.' Now the whole happiness of creatures depends on resting in the sovran good which is the fount of all good things, and hence our Lady Mary says these words about herself wherein she counsels our interior man to cultivate in lowliness the habit of divine repose in which the soul is most of all united, and without it not. She says, 'In all things have I sought rest for my inner man.'

In this connection mark how the divine essence carries pent up in itself all creaturely perfection, creaturely existence being the reflection of God's essence. St John says, *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat*: that which was made, in God was life. Creatures in their pre-existing form in God have been divine life for ever. Hence the opening words of our quotation from the Book of Wisdom, 'all things,' mean that our Lady sought peace for her inner man in the eternal good of the divine nature wherein as in a magic mirror creature-nature as a whole is one in God eternally. Referring to the paradigm of all things in God, they being one divinity.

Theologians put three fundamental questions about these pre-existing forms in God, whereto attach some admirable doctrines and stimulating facts. The first question is, whether ideas of all the creatures exist in God eternally or not? The second question is, whether these ideas are one or more in number? The third question is, whether the divine mind has ideas of all the things it knows or does it know at all without ideas?

To the first question Doctor Thomas answers that, it is necessary to suppose in the divine being ideas of all the creatures. And his argument is this. The three terms, form, idea and semblance are identical in meaning. Now the form, idea or semblance of a thing, a rose for instance, is present in my soul and must be for two reasons. One is, because from the appearance of its mental form I can paint the rose in corporal matter, so there must be an image of the rose-form in my soul. The second reason is, because from the subjective rose-idea I recognise the objective rose although I do not copy it. Just as I can carry in my head the notion of a house I never mean to build. In both these ways [*i.e.* as types and principles of knowledge] ideas exist in God, for with all natural things it is the rule for the natural form or character of the progeny or fruit to exemplify the type belonging to

its species ; as with mankind, for instance, the generative power of the father's manhood is repeated in the son's born manhood so that a man breeds men, a lion lions and a falcon falcons. The rose grows on a rose-bush not a cabbage-stalk ; fire engenders fire.

And sometimes the idea of the work is in the practical power not as a natural species but theoretically, as the house of wood and stone is designed in the architect's practical mind, who makes the outward house as much like his ideal as he can. Now since God created this whole world (not that all creatures are by natural birth descended from God's nature like the eternal Word of the Father, for in that case all creatures would be God, which no sane mind allows : creature-nature rejects it as an impossible, false thing), therefore God created all creatures by practical understanding of divine nature. So there must be eternally in the divine understanding the pre-existing form or idea to the likeness of which God created this creature and not another whereof God had no pattern in his mind.

The second question is, whether the idea is one or more in number ? To this the Doctor answers that, the ultimate end of the work is ever the real intention of the work's first cause. Now the ultimate end of the world is its good, *i.e.* the divine ordering of all creatures, as Aristotle says. Hence this ordering of the world must be eternally foreknown and foreordained in God, who is its first cause. Ergo, he has in him the particular ideas appropriate to that order, whence it follows that he must carry in him ideas of individual creatures. For just as no architect can carry in his head the plan of a whole house without the plans of all its details, so there must be in God as many forms as there are natural grades of created things emanating from him ; the rose, for instance, has one special form, the violet another ; man has one distinctive type, an angel has another, and so with other things.

The astonishing thing is that this multiplicity of forms should consist with the simplicity of God in whom all essential things are one. We can explain it thus. The idea of the work exists in the worker's practical mind as an object of his understanding which regards it as expressing his idea to which he forms the material work, and is not in the mind of the worker as a form of understanding informing his mind and setting up active intellection. The plan of the house in the architect's mind is (something understood by him). It is not repugnant to the simplicity of divine understanding to see and understand more than one thing as object. But it would be repugnant to his simple nature if by a plurality of objective forms it were stimulated and reduced to the subjective act of understanding as opposed to the mirror of God's

essence. Countless ideas exist in God in the sense that he sees and understands them, not in the sense that his intellect sees in them. To resume. God knows his essence perfectly so far as it is knowable both in itself and so far as all creatures in their natural mode are exemplified in divine essence; and this express image of all creatures in the divine essence is their prototype, their idea. It follows that there are as many types as there are grades of nature to be typified.

With regard to this question of how the countless forms in the divine essence consist with their being the essence of God, they being many in number and the essence of God only one, it may be looked at in this way. We call these ideas the essence of God, not as such but inasmuch as the essence of God is a mirror reflecting all creatures. And since in the impartible essence of God we have the exemplar of all things, which we call their idea, therefore the form is many and the essence only one. Even as in a mirror there are many forms reflected, but an eye placed in the mirror would see all these forms as one object of its vision; they would not be innate in it nor would they form the eye's intrinsic faculty of active present or passive and potential sight, for in that case the image would be no more than one.

The third question was, whether God has in him ideas of all the things he knows or does he know at all without ideas? Doctor Thomas answers this as follows: These pre-existing forms are the origin or principle of the creation of all creatures, and in this sense they are types and pertain to practical knowledge. These forms, again, are the principle of all knowledge of creatures and as such they are really essential images of creatures; wherefore of everything he knows and his conception of it he must have ideas.

This fact prompts the question, How does God know evil, which has no being in itself but is a privation of being? The answer is this. As I said above, all creaturely existence has its idea in God, but since evil or sin has no being that is aught (as Dionysius says), but deprives good of good or virtuous being, as blindness of eye has no positive existence but it deprives the eye of sight, even so God's mind perceives all sin and evil in the idea of the corresponding good, not in the form of sin; for instance, he knows lying in the idea of truth.

Consider next how God knows virtue. In the eternal mirror of his works God knows all creaturely perfections both natural and ghostly, perceiving in their pre-existing forms all accidents as substantial being. But accidents are various. Basic characteristics of the abiding nature of their subject God has no ideas of apart from the ideas which are proper to their subject: the whiteness of the daisy, for example, not its whiteness as a separate

idea. But accidents subsequently added to the abiding nature he knows in particular ideas apart from the idea of any host. Whence it follows that all noble human attributes like acquired virtues and spiritual wisdom, God knows in separate eternal forms reflecting the wisdom and virtue of souls in general.

Moreover, since grace is not natural to creature therefore grace is communicated to the soul in the guise of accident, and by the same token, faith and other godly virtues are inspired supernaturally in the soul, and love and sometimes divine wisdom as with the prophets and apostles. Again, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are supernaturally instilled into the soul. And spiritual sweetness too is an inspired accident. Wherefore of all the graces in mere creatures God has ideas wherein he knows the contingencies of grace.

In the divine essence there exist then also particular ideas reflecting the certainty or hope and divine charity of the soul, albeit she is but a creature. In their own ideas there exist as well all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which have an adventitious character. This I affirm because the prime gift of love wherein he gives all gifts, this love he is himself in Person and in essence. And because, again, all the sacred rites of the seven sacraments, wherein the soul is sanctified and initiated into godly life, because all these were instituted to show forth the workings of grace in the soul, therefore God must know all the seven sacraments in eternal pre-existing forms and each in a distinct one. The cathartic virtue of baptism by natural water comes springing out of the eternal formal baptism of the mirror of God's nature. So, too, the primordial perfect conception of that nature survives in marriage, wherein the mutable nature of the father is reborn into the immortal and impersonal nature of the soul of his child, where nature, no longer ridden by the race-instinct governing creatures, is in that sense performing the work of all creation. Marriage is true to its exemplar as long as we preserve it in its natural purity and free from animal intention which is all opposed to its divine ideal. And the same I say about the other sacraments. God then has ideas of every longing, love and godly intuition, whether of sweetness or of inwardness, wherein he feels and knows at once all thy desires when thou dost call on him in prayer; and in these same ideas the soul of any saint whom we invoke sees all our prayerful longings from the beginning of the world down to the very end in one flash of God's essence, just as an angel sees creatures and their prototype in God all at once in the vision of God, in the dawn, not in the evening light, or else they would not know our longing for them. Here ends the first part of this sermon.

Part II[1]

Now it must be remembered that this rest of the inner man in the divine wonder born of vision and divine love, transcends in its perfection and its sweetness any activity of the outward man, and for nine reasons.

The first reason is, because in this passivity of the interior man, which is one of knowing and loving, the highest of the faculties in man are engaged in their noblest and most proper occupation and are thus detached and free from everything temporal and mortal, and these powers are knowledge and love. The life of the exterior man, on the other hand, is one of varying sensation. St Gregory says that Rachel, meaning the interior life, signifies a vision of the source, but Leah, the other sister, means the life of the exterior man, for she had weak eyes.

The second reason is, that man's interior wont of love and contemplation is more lasting, though not at the culminating point of actual vision, for the moment of supreme illumination is short-lived, and passes like a flash of lightning. According to St Augustine, the common use of love and knowledge lasts longer with the inner man than with the outer.

The third reason is, because man's inner life of rest and spiritual leisure is somewhat like the peace of the divine eternal essence; for albeit the Father is ever in the act of engendering his Word that does not disturb his rest; as our Lord says, 'My Father worketh until now.' The life of outward man, on the other hand, is one of perpetual physical unrest. Mary sat still and Martha kept about the house.

The fourth reason is, that the interior life is more self-sufficient than that of outward man. The inner man needs nothing for his work but the freedom from bodily affairs which comes with detachment of the soul-powers, together with knowledge and love. The freer and less occupied with mortal things the better adapted to God is the life of the inner man. But the life of outward man has need of many things which are disturbing: of working and talking and giving and taking and eating and drinking. St Luke tells us how Martha, meaning the outward man, was cumbered with overmuch serving; aye, though it be all on God's account, like works of mercy, natheless it entails a deal of trouble.

The fifth reason is, that the interior life is infinitely more enjoyable than that of outward man. As the philosopher says, Intellectual delights are free from drawbacks, but every mortal

[1] This is not numbered separately in Pfeiffer's text.

pleasure has its other side. St Augustine says that while Martha was distraught Mary was in company with her interior man. Hence the comment of one teacher, 'Mary taxed Martha before the eternal Word Christ Jesus.' Why did not Mary answer? She did not hear, because she was not at home by herself. Where was she then? She was with her inner man in the Word whose word she was attending to. For the soul is where she loves rather than where she is giving natural life.

The sixth reason is, because the interior life, apart from knowledge and apart from love, is desirable in itself. But the outward life is desirable only in so far as it makes for the greater good of the soul. The prophet cries, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord and that same will I seek: to see God's will and behold his godly habitation.'

The seventh reason is, because the inner life is concerned with things divine and the outer with things human. St Augustine says, Mary heard the Word in the beginning, whereas it was the human word that Martha served.

The eighth reason is, because the inner life is that of the powers most proper to the soul. But the powers used for outward purposes we have in common with the brutes, the senses, namely. David says, 'Lord thou dost nourish man and beast.' And later on he adds, 'but Lord, we men shall see thy light in the light of thine own self,' that is, in the light of understanding whereby man is distinguished from the brutes.

The ninth reason is given by our Lord himself, who says, 'Mary has chosen the better part.' St Augustine says, 'Martha had no bad one; hers was a good one too, though Mary had the best.' Hers the uses of the inner man, which starting here go on eternally. But the outward life of works of mercy ends where there is no poverty nor woe, that is, in eternity. Now though the inner life is intrinsically best, the outward life is sometimes better, as in cases of bodily necessity; to feed the hungry, for example, were better than to spend the time in contemplation. According to one teacher, to see a man in any need and fail to help would make me guilty towards him, and St Augustine says I ought to lend him aid. In cases then of real necessity, to use the works of the outward man for the relief of one's own self or neighbour is better than to settle down to the interior man's spiritual idleness of mind and will.—It is now explained how our Lady rested in the eternal good. Let us too seek rest for the inner man as well as for the outer, So help us God. Amen.

CII

HONOUR THY FATHER

Hæc dicit dominus : honora patrem tuum etc. (*Matt.* 15_4). This Latin quotation is taken from the gospel. The words were spoken by our Lord, and the translation runs, 'Honour thy father and mother.' And another commandment is given by God our Lord, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods nor his house nor anything that is his.' The third point is that the people went to Moses and said, 'Do thou speak to us, for we cannot hear God.' The fourth, that God said to Moses, 'An altar of earth and in earth shalt thou make unto me and all that is offered thereon thou shalt burn away.' The fifth is that Moses went into the cloud and ascending into the mountain there he found God : it was in the darkness that he found the true light.

There is a saying of St Augustine's, 'Where the lamb sinks there swims the ox and the cow and where the cow swims the elephant runs and forges ahead.' Which is a pretty parable to draw a moral from. The scriptures are the deep sea, St Augustine says, and the little lamb the humble, simple soul which is able to fathom Holy Writ. By the ox that swims we understand ill-tutored folk : each choosing out of them the things that suit himself. But in the elephant that goes ahead we recognise wise souls searching the scriptures and making progress in them. I am amazed how full the scriptures are withal the masters say they are not to be taken merely as they stand ; the material things in them, they say, must be translated to a higher plane, for which we must have symbols.—First it reached to the ankles, next it came up to the knee, thirdly it rose to the girdle, and fourthly it covered his head and he was submerged altogether.

Now what does this mean ? St Augustine says, at first the scriptures will amuse and attract the child, and in the end, when he tries to understand them, they make fools of the wise, for none is so simple-minded but can find his level there nor none so wise but when he tries to fathom them will find they are beyond his depth and discover more therein. All the stories and quotations taken from them have another, esoteric, meaning. Our understanding of them is as totally unlike the thing as it is in itself and as it is in God, as though it did not exist.

To return to our text. 'Honour thy father and mother,' and in a general sense it does mean father and mother, that we ought to honour them, and all who have spiritual power are to be honoured and preferred as well as the authors of thy temporal weal. Herein we wade, herein do we touch bottom ; but it is precious little we

get out of it. It is a woman who says, 'If we ought to honour the authors of our outward good much more are we behoven to magnify the author of it all.' What we have here outwardly in multiplicity is all within and one. Yours to make this likeness like unto the Father. I was thinking this evening that all likeness ends in sameness with the Father. In the second place, thou oughtest to honour thy father, meaning thy heavenly Father, the source of thy being. Who honours the Father? None but the Son: he alone does him honour. And none honours the Son save only the Father. The Father's whole love, his fondness, his favours, are for the Son and him only. The Father knows nothing at all but the Son. Such delight does he take in his Son that he wants nothing else but to be getting his Son, for he is his exact likeness, the perfect image of his Father.

The teaching of our school is that anything known or born is an image. They say that in begetting his only-begotten Son the Father is producing his own image abiding in himself, in the ground of the image, as it has ever been in him, (*formæ illius*) *i.e.* his immanent form. It is contrary to nature and seems to me irrational, the doctrine that God is known by likeness, by this thing or by that. For he, after all, is neither this nor that, and *father* is not satisfied till he returns to his first nature, to the innermost, to the ground and core of fatherhood, where he has been for ever in himself, in his father-nature: to where he enjoys himself in the Father as the Father does himself in the one alone. Here wood, stone, grass-blades, all things are the same. This is the best of all, and I have fooled myself therein. All the natural powers being gathered to a head are plunged into the Father-nature, so that they are one, one Son, transcending all the rest and subsisting alone in the paternal nature, or if not the one they are at least the image of the one. This nature, being of God, seeks not what is outside her, nay, this nature, existing in itself, has naught to do with ornament: nature which is of God seeks none other than God's likeness.

I was thinking this evening that a likeness is an outwork (preamble). I cannot see a thing unless it has some likeness, some relation to me, neither can I know a thing excepting it is like me. God has all things hidden in himself; not this and that distinct but one in the same nature. The eye is coloured and also receives colour, the ear not. The ear senses tone and the tongue has taste. It is a case of like to like. The form of the soul and God's image have the same nature: we being sons. If I had neither eyes nor ears still I might have being. Who robs me of my eyes robs me not therefore of my being nor yet of my life, for my life is seated in the heart. A blow aimed at my eye I parry by a lifting of the

hand. A blow at my heart I should stop with any portion of my body. But if someone attempted to cut off my head I should hit out straight from the shoulder in order to preserve my life and being.

I am fond of saying, You must break the outside to let out the inside: to get at the kernel means breaking the shell. Even so to find nature herself all her likenesses have to be shattered and the further in the nearer the actual thing. On coming to one, where it is all one, she is the same. Who honours God? He who is ever seeking God's glory.

Many years ago I was not; not long after that my father and my mother eating bread and meat and the vegetables growing in the garden, I became a man. In this my father and my mother were unable to assist, but God made my body without aid and created my soul after the supreme. Thus I became possessed of life (*possedi me*). This grain of rye has it in its nature to develop into wheat, and it never rests until it has that nature. This corn seed has it in its nature to be all things and pays the penalty of death in order to be all things. And this metal, copper, has it in its nature to be gold, and it will never rest till it has gotten that same nature. Aye, this wood has in its nature the power of turning into stone; I say more than that: it may indeed become all things if put into the fire and allowed to burn away and be transmuted to the fire-nature; then same comes to same and has eternally one being. I trow that wood and stone and bone and all the grasses have collectively one being in the first nature. And if so with this nature then how about the nature which is so intrinsically pure that it seeks not either this or that but transcending all the others is simply making for its primitive perfection?

I was thinking this evening, there are many heavens. There are some incredulous who will not believe that this bread upon the altar may be changed, that God can do it. (How unworthy, to deny that God is capable of this.) If God has given to nature the power to be all things, how much easier to him must be the changing to his body of this altar bread. If this frail nature from a drop of blood can contrive a man, how much more possible for God to make his body from a bit of bread. Who honours God? He who is ever seeking God's glory. This meaning is more obvious albeit the former is the better one.

The fourth point (is), 'they stood afar off and said unto Moses: Moses speak thou to us for we cannot hear God.' They were standing at a distance, that is the reason they could not hear God.

'Moses went into the cloud and ascended into the mountain and there he beheld the divine light.' We see this light best in

the dark: in suffering and travail this light is nearest to us. Let God do his best or his worst he is bound to give himself to us whether in travail or distress. There was once a pious dame with many sons, whom they sought to slay. Smiling she said, 'Grieve not, be of good cheer and remember your heavenly Father, for from me ye have gotten nothing whatsoever.' As though to say, Ye have your being straight from God. This applies to us. Our Lord said, 'Thy darkness (*i.e.* thy suffering) shall be turned into bright light.' But I must not love nor covet it. It was said by a master in another place, 'The mysterious darkness of the invisible light of the eternal Deity is unknown and never shall be known.' And the light of the eternal Father has ever been shining in this darkness and the darkness comprehends not the light. May we arrive at this eternal light, So help us God. Amen.

CIII

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE MOST HIGH

Ex oro altissimi prodivi (*Eccl.* 24_5). These words, which I have quoted in Latin, we may speak in the Person of the eternal Word. He says, 'I proceeded forth out of the mouth of the Most High.' This is the exalted source which uttered from the Father's heart the eternal Word which took on human nature in our Lady's womb. Not of this carnal birth am I going to tell, for much is told you of it. It is on the eternal birth that I propose to speak, and I will broach the subject by answering two questions.

The first one is, Whether the eternal Word can be called the perfect Word seeing it is still in the throes of birth?—Yes, for the eternal Word is gotten in the essential light and abides therein, untold to anything outside it, and is withal infallibly uttered by the Father. Hence it may well be called the perfect Word.

The second question is, Whether our intelligence can at all conceive the perfect Word? for it is proper to every understanding that it should understand. Is it not the same as our understanding in itself?—I say no, because our word is gotten in a fitful light. Our understanding is a changing thing, so it cannot conceive a perfect word. The word you hear from me is not infallible, it is a sign of the Word within me.

Now mark the way of the eternal birth. The Personal understanding as confined to its unity of nature is one with the understanding whereby the Father understands himself in his characteristic nature. Were this not the case there would be two intelligible essences. But there are not: there is but one intelligible essence wherein the Father sees himself in his characteristic

nature. The object of his thought is the eternal Word. Where this is confined to the natural understanding of the Father it is none other than the Father-nature. Where this same Word is directed to itself there is ever distinction of Person and withal one simple essence divine in nature. Here I will put four questions the better for you to understand the mode of the eternal birth, though, let me say at once, that this is inconceivable to the multitudinous mind. However, I will tell you as much as it is possible for your minds to grasp.

The first question is, Why is the Person of the Son called born and the Person of the Father not? The answer is, that it is the personal understanding of the Father wherewith he understands himself in his characteristic nature, but the product of this conception is the eternal Word. Hence the eternal Word is said to be begotten and the Person of the Father not.—Question two: Is the work of the eternal birth wrought by his personal power or by his natural power? Some theologians say it is due to the personal power of the Father since it is proper to all begotten things to receive the same nature they are gotten by. Where saw ye the father that imparted not his own nature to his son? So runs the argument for the eternal birth being due to personal power. This is not my view. Where the personal understanding keeps to its unity of nature there is this nature Person. Now the eternal Word originates in the essential thought wherein the Father understands himself in his characteristic nature. It follows that the work of the eternal birth must be due to his natural power, for if the eternal Word sprang from the personal understanding of the Father then this eternal Word would be the cause of its own self, for this conception is the Word.

The third question is, Where does the Father-nature have maternal names? Where it does maternal work. Where personal understanding keeps to its unity of nature and has intercourse therewith, there the Father-nature has maternal names and is doing mother's work, for it is exclusively a mother's work to receive the seed of the eternal Word. In essential thought the mother-nature has paternal names and does paternal work.

The fourth question is, Whether this work is essential or does the Father play a casual part therein? I say, no. If he stopped a single instant he would negate himself. For the eternal Word is the image of the Father as he conceives himself in his character of Person, with the added dignity which the eternal Word receives in its own Person, all the perfection which the Father has and all the omnipotence peculiar to his nature. The heretical doctor Arius observes concerning this: It appears to me to be untrue that the eternal Word receives all the perfection that the Father

has and all the omnipotence peculiar to his nature, for it cannot do what the Father does: he cannot beget another Son. But as St Augustine says, That he does not beget another Son is not due to impotence, but it behoves him not to. A statement which some doctors misconstrue, giving to understand that the Son an he would could beget another Son. Which is erroneous, for in that case the Person of the Son would be the Person of the Father. The reason for not doing it is this. Each Person receives the same nature albeit variously: the Father as fatherhood, the Son as sonship and the Holy Ghost as the common product of them both. Here the Persons are an hypostasis of the nature, each Person receiving the one nature all at once as essence. Where (the Word) receives its dignity the three shine with one light, they having this light as their common being. The dignity the eternal Word receives by birth is that of being equal with the Father, for it springs from the essential conception of the Father. As confined to this conception it is none other than divine nature; in its aspect of the Word it is distinct in Person and withal in nature one impartible essence.

Here arises the question, How can the eternal Word be at once discrete and one simple essence divine in nature? The best answer theologians have to this is that it is due to the impartibility and simplicity of that nature. The entire content of divine nature is one impartible essence which operates by divine nature. May we attain this oneness so far as it is possible to us. So help us God. Amen.

CIV

SUFFERING

I say that next to God there is no nobler thing than suffering. Were there anything more noble than suffering the heavenly Father would have given it to his Son Jesus Christ, in exemplary fashion, for all things. We find in Christ, as regards his manhood, nothing so much as suffering. Suffering was with him at his birth, and it never left him while he was here on earth. I say, moreover, that had Christ been a man upon this earth without his deity, yet would he have been noble beyond all human ken by reason of his suffering; for granting that suffering is noble, he who has most suffering is the noblest. But no human suffering was equal to Christ's passion. And he is the more noble in proportion to it. Again I hold, if anything were nobler than suffering, God would have saved mankind therewith, for we might well accuse him of being unfriendly to his Son if he knew of something superior to suffering. And I say, were not suffering

always noble, the heavenly Father would have left his Son some few hours on earth that were free from suffering. But we do not find that Christ on earth spent one single hour without suffering. Suffering then must be superior to all else. I ween that our Lady, God's mother, rather than that she should be deprived of the reward attached to the least instant of her suffering at sight of her child's martyrdom, would choose to have remained here upon earth and not behold God till the judgment day, provided that would win back this reward. So great the guerdon won in that short hour.

I declare, all the humility and virtue we attribute to our Lady brought her no such great reward or love of God as the least of all the sufferings that God sent her. I say that if our Lady, God's mother, and suffering stood together in the street and with our Lady all her earned reward for chastity, humility and her other virtues except suffering: to our Lady suffering would appear as lovely as sunshine in a burrow, for in that case she would be outside God. And again, I say: suppose a man committed a sin beyond all sins, it might involve a suffering wherein by virtuous conduct he could cancel all his sin and win greater merit in God's eyes than any of his saints. Further, I maintain, no man apart from God has ever been so holy or so good as to deserve the least nobility such as the smallest suffering would give. Given one man endowed with the collective humility and virtues of all the people who have lived since God created the first man, he, for all his virtues, would not merit the reward a man wins by a little suffering. I tell you, right suffering is the mother of all virtues, for right suffering so subdues the heart, it cannot rise to pride but perforce is lowly. And suffering makes for chastity; for in right suffering vice is burnt away. And to one who has mastered all the virtues, suffering is the mother of virtue as a whole. Nothing makes a man so like God as suffering. For he who has least vices is the most like God. But nothing is like suffering for killing a man's vices. Ergo, it makes man Godlike. Finally I say, not all the theologists together could describe what profit, what glory lies in suffering. Suffering alone is sufficient preparation for God's dwelling in man's heart. God dwells only with the sinless. But suffering exorcises sin. Hence God is always with a man in suffering; as he himself declared by the mouth of the prophet, 'Whosoever is sorrowful, I will myself be with him.'

[Peradventure thou wilt say, 'If it be a fact that suffering is so noble and profits one so much, why are not the Jews and heathens saved? I see and hear a great deal of their sufferings, for as captives they are ever subject to the Christians and that

causes them much suffering.' I answer. Baptism is the basis of the welfare, the salvation, of mankind. In the absence of it, virtues and good works are not rewarded with eternal grace. And since the Jews are not baptized, they have no guerdon of eternal grace, but are accursed on earth as well as in the other world.][1] But thou mayst object, Why is it that all Christians are not saved; they are all God's, and there is nobody on earth but is bound to suffer in some fashion? My answer is, There are two kinds of sufferers. Some, when suffering befalls, take it not as if it came from God; they resist it to the utmost, saying in their hearts, What have I done to God that he should visit me with such misfortune? and are moved to tears. Not that in this thought they are to blame, but in other cases they chide God vehemently, whereas God sends the suffering to rid them of their sins and by not accepting it in the proper spirit they make it useless to them; and to such as these there is no reward for suffering though they are always having it; they scorn God's gift and thrust it from them. And they chase away God too, albeit they fain would have him. On the other hand, some people take it as from God, when their suffering comes, and send it back to God. They take it from God, saying in their hearts: God, I accept this suffering from no one else but thee, for my sins have thoroughly deserved it. And they send their suffering back to God, saying in their hearts, Lord God, I willingly contribute all the suffering thou hast suffered from the hour of thy birth down to the very end; for thou wert a pure and sinless soul, yet wert in great affliction; it is more fit that I should be afflicted, I who am a man in sin. Accepting suffering thus, a man will merit the eternal kingdom. God help us to attain it. Amen.

[1] This is probably a gloss which has become incorporated in the text.

II

TRACTATES

I[1]

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

'Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things shall be added unto you.' Since Christ bids us seek the kingdom of God it is our duty to know what this kingdom is. Know then that God's kingdom is himself and his perfect nature. Secondly, there is God's kingdom in the soul. He himself says: 'The kingdom of God is within you.'

Consider this first kingdom. Theologists say that God's kingdom is unity of essence in a trinity of Persons. The question is, where is God happiest? I answer that God's happiness is all alike in him according to his unity but according to our understanding God is far happier in his unity of essence than in his trinity of Persons, as we will prove. According to some theologists there are three kinds of distinctions in the Godhead. First, rational distinctions; secondly, formal distinctions; and thirdly real distinctions, to wit, the mutual relations of the Persons. Others say the Godhead has no more than two kinds of distinctions, rational and real.

Take first the distinction of Persons. St John says: 'In the beginning was the Word.' This beginning or origin is the Father, as St Augustine says. The question is, has the Father a beginning? The answer is: yes, his beginning is primary not proceeding, as I will show. Theologists teach that we must distinguish in the Godhead between essence and being (*i.e.* nature). Being in the Godhead is deity itself and is the first thing we apprehend about God. Deity is the whole basis of divine perfection. The Godhead in itself is motionless unity and balanced stillness and is the source of all emanations. Hence I assume a passive welling-up. We call this first utterance *being*, for the most intrinsic utterance, the first formal assumption in the Godhead is being: being as essential word. God is being, but being is not God.

Now the origin of the Father is necessarily involved in this assumption of a passive welling-up. In other words, the deity being in itself intelligence, therefore the divine nature steps forth

[1] Jostes, No. 82.

into relation of otherness : other but not another, for this distinction is rational not real. Thus the first Person arises in the Godhead passively, not from any active beginning. Hence its beginning is without property (or, Person).

The question is, what is the Person of the Father ? I answer that it is *being* in the Godhead, not according to essence but according to paternity which is the formal notion specifically determining the Father. The Father is the beginning of the Godhead. Hence, some theologists assert that if there were neither Son nor Holy Ghost in the Godhead there would still be the Person of the Father. When, therefore, St John says : ' In the beginning was the Word,' we must not understand this beginning to be God's essence or his nature, for the Father alone is the active origin of the Son.

Mark how the Son is in the Father. Theologists say that the Father looking into himself actually conceives in himself his own impartible exuberant nature. There follows the characteristic of that nature. The same nature which in the Father is active is receptive in the Son, for they participate it according to their properties.

Anent this divine birth theologists teach that this word is to be taken in a two-fold sense : essential and personal. The first or essential word every Person possesses visually, but the Father possesses it both visually and really. And this same Word in Person is the Son. The same power which is active in the Father is passive in the Son, the Son receiving his divinity from the Father. We must understand the passivity begotten of passivity, divinity of divinity, as properties of the Persons by which the essence is determined. For saints and doctors teach that the Persons proceed from the essence as origin, the essence being determined by the Persons and the Persons by their properties. As paternity is the formal notion which specifically determines the Person of the Father, so filiation is the formal notion which distinguishes the Person of the Son. These formal notions signify the relationship of the Persons. And this property, this formal relationship of paternity and filiation, is the final attribute of divinity. Paternity and filiation are divine accidents and dependent properties.

Mark how in this birth from the Father the Word remains within as essence and goes forth as Person. Philosophers teach that to every rational concept there succeeds an intelligible word. Now when the Father conceives himself in himself, his own nature is the object of his understanding. The Father observes himself and his nature has another property, that of being observed. Accordingly the Son remains within as essence and goes forth as

Person. Corresponding with the divided nature of this act the Son is born and proceeds out of the paternal heart. Thus saith the Eternal Wisdom: 'I proceeded out of the mouth of the Most High,' to wit, out of the natural conception of the essential word of the divine Father. Not that there are in the Godhead two words really but only logically.

'The Word was with God.' That means, as a Person distinct from the Father, as here demonstrated.

Observe further concerning these two how they bring forth the Holy Ghost. Theologists teach that the Father, pouring himself out as love into the Son, there his love is as it were reflected, the Son pouring himself back into the Father. This mutual outpouring of love is the common spiration of the Father and the Son. It might be thought that this spiration is identical in the two Persons but it is not. For according to its formal origin this spirative force is different in Father and Son, the Father being formally something other than the Son. But taking it, this spiration, both formally and really, it is the formal notion and the property which distinguishes the Person of the Holy Ghost. Hence the Holy Ghost proceeds from two formal sources as from one active origin.

Then comes the question whether this property (Person) of the Holy Ghost results from the (divine) nature in the same way as the property of the Son does? The answer is: no, for were that so the Holy Ghost must proceed by an act of nature, like the Son; which is not the case, for then there would be two Sons in the Godhead. But the divine nature is posterior to the property of the Holy Ghost which proceeds by spiration of the free-will. Hence were it possible to separate the nature from the Person of the Holy Ghost in the Godhead, the Holy Ghost would nevertheless continue to subsist in itself apart from the nature. With the Son this would not be possible seeing that the Son emanates from the Father as an intelligible word proceeding from the act of the exuberant nature of the Father; hence he could not exist apart from that nature. And as the nature is posterior to the Person of the Holy Ghost and as the Holy Ghost does not subsist apart from that nature, so on the other hand it is true that the Person of the Son is posterior to the nature. The nature does not exist apart from the Son, for the Son is the image of the Father from whom he emanates naturally; which the Holy Ghost does not, seeing that it emanates from his free-will. It follows that there is reciprocity only between paternity and filiation; not the Holy Ghost. Howbeit the reciprocity of the spirative power common to the paternity and filiation is rational not real. Herein, noble soul, seek with understanding the kingdom of God.

St John says: 'And God was the word,' signifying unity of nature. Up, noble soul, arise in divine wonder at this exalted fellowship: the three Persons united in one impartible nature! The prophet says: 'The Lord shall reign for ever and beyond.' God reigns (for ever) in distinction of Persons, but his reign in the beyond is in unity of nature. There God is the kingdom of himself, being super-essential.

Then comes the question: Can the divine essence as essence, apart from those formal distinctions which philosophers call the eternal eternities, be God's happiness or that of creatures? We answer: No! Essence as essence is the same in God and creatures, but God's happiness and the soul's also lies in the divine nature. For the divine nature subsists in itself with all its perfections, to wit, the eternal eternities which are intrinsic in it. Some teach that it is possible for the soul to attain happiness in the knowledge of one of these formal relations regardless of the rest. But that is not true; if it were, each of these formal relations must be established in itself apart from the others and detached from its divine nature, which is impossible; hence this opinion is false. But the soul's beatitude consists in comprehending all together, in one property, these eternal eternities which are the formal expression of the divine nature. For here is no division; God is the superessential one, his own beatitude and that of all creatures in the actuality of his Godhead. Be sure that in this unity God knows distinctions but as one impartible property.

In this unity God is idle. The Godhead effects neither this nor that; it is God who effects all things. God in activity is manifold and knows multiplicity. God as one is absolutely free from activity. In this unity God knows nothing save that he superessentially is in his own self.

Hence we understand: 'God was the word' to refer to the unity of the essence. 'The same was in the beginning with God,' his equal in wisdom, in truth, in goodness and in all the essential perfections, to wit, the eternal eternities, the formal modes, the fullness of the divine essence. This superessential unity is what is meant by the divine kingdom which the spirit seeks with knowledge and with love.

Secondly, by this kingdom of God we understand the soul, for the soul is of like nature with the Godhead. Hence all that has been said here about the kingdom of God, how God is himself the kingdom, may be said with equal truth about the soul.

St John says: 'All things were made by him.' This refers to the soul, for the soul is all things. The soul is all things in that she is an image of God and as such she is also the kingdom of

God; as God is essentially in himself without beginning so in the kingdom of the soul he is, as essence, without end. 'God,' says one philosopher, 'is in the soul in such a fashion that his whole Godhead hangs upon her.' It is far better for God to be in the soul than for the soul to be in God. The soul is not happy because she is in God, she is happy because God is in her. Rely upon it, God himself is happy in the soul, for God, when he broke out and wrought the soul, so far maintained his ground in her as to conceal in her his divine treasure, his heavenly kingdom. Hence Christ says: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field.' This field is the soul, wherein lies hidden the treasure of the divine kingdom. Accordingly God and all creatures are happy in the soul. What we say of the soul applies to her as being an image of God.

Let us see therefore wherein this image lies. One theologist says it lies in her powers, and this is commonly held to be true. And it is true when rightly understood. If it is taken to mean that her powers are diverse there is no ultimate truth in it, but if the powers are understood to be one at the summit of her activity then it is true. In this divine activity the soul looks back immediately, intellectually, in the divine nature. In this divine act she conceives her own nature superessentially in God. In this act all is divine to the highest image, which in its proper activity it is very God and happy—formally, not objectively. For gazing into itself it simultaneously conceives God in himself, without means. Hence it is happy in him formally, and objectively owing to the divine nature. One doctor says that this supernal light flows immediately out of God and at the same instant by an act of intellection is gotten without means into God. Hence its going out of and persistence in God are one intellectual conception, the impartible nature of the same intelligent act. In God, be sure, the soul in its highest prototype has never known creature as creature nor has she ever therein possessed either time or space. For in this image everything is God: sour and sweet, good and bad, small and great, all are one in this image. This image is no more changed by anything in time than the divine nature is changed by anything that is creature; for it apprehends and uses all things according to the law of godhood.

Now it may be asked: If this kingdom is in us why is it unknown to us? To which I answer that, owing to the soul's natural disposition towards creatures, all her acts are bound to originate in creaturely images; hence these acts are thought by some to be the seat of this image in the soul, though this is not the case. These persons little know the nobility of the soul, whose activity in her ordinary understanding originates in an intelligible image

in highest thought (or, memory), begotten there as to form by phantasmal images and as to essence by the supernal, God-beholding image whence the soul receives power to understand all truth. In the train of this understanding comes the ordinary will, which is nothing but the bias of the mind. Now since the ordinary understanding takes things for true and the will takes them for good, things are the object of both these activities which are alien and remote from God. For God is neither good nor true. And as God is detached and free from all that creatures can understand, so also is the highest image of the Godhead.

It is a question whether there is mutual regard between God and creatures? I answer that, God has no regard to creatures, for God has no regard except towards himself; but creatures have regard to God, for everything that ever issued from him is ever gazing back towards him. Apply this to the highest image. The instant it glanced out from God this highest image looked back again, with countenance unveiled conceiving the divine nature without means. From this act is gotten its whole existence. In this act this prototype is God and is called the image of God; in its breaking forth it is a creature and is called the image of the soul.

Consider then thyself, O noble soul, and the nobility within thee, for thou are honoured above all creatures in that thou art an image of God; and despise what is mean for thou art destined to greatness!

That is what is meant by the soul being the kingdom of God.

'Seek first the kingdom of God.' It should be our only care, our only quest, to know the nobility of God and the nobility of the soul. Let us see then how to seek the kingdom of God.

In the Book of Love it is written: 'Knowest thou not thyself, O fairest among women? Then go forth and follow after the footsteps of thy flocks!' These words refer to the soul; she is the fairest of all creatures and she shall go forth in perceiving her own beauty. Now observe in the soul three sorts of going-forth out of three sorts of nature which she has. The first is her creaturely nature. The second is the nature she has in the personal Word of the Trinity. The third is that which belongs to her in the exuberant nature functioning in the Father, the beginning of all creatures.

Taking this first exodus, note how she has got to go out of her creaturely nature. Christ says: 'If any man will come after me let him deny himself and follow me.' As surely as God lives, no man will ever go forth into the negation of himself until he is as free from his own self as he was when he was not. Doctors declare that man is to be known in two ways: as outward man and

as inward man. The outward whose works are bodily and the inward whose works are ghostly. By the inner man God is sought in the contemplative life, by the outer man God is sought in the active life. Now mark my words. I say again what I have said before: outward disciplines are of little worth; they are useful only in subduing natures that are still uncontrolled. Know that the discipline of outward acts, though it subdue nature, cannot kill it. Nature dies by ghostly acts. There are many to be found who, with the best intentions, cling on to themselves, not denying themselves. Verily I say, these persons are mistaken, for it is contrary to human reason, contrary to the habit of grace and against the nature of the Holy Ghost. As for those who see their salvation in outward practices, I do not say they will be lost, but they will get to God only through hot cleansing fires; for they follow not God who quit not themselves; keeping hold of themselves they follow their own darkness. God is no more to be found in any bodily exercise than in sin. Nevertheless those who make much practice of outward disciplines are greatly regarded by the eyes of the world; which follows by analogy, for those who understand only that which is bodily esteem highly the life they can grasp with the senses. None but a fool would prize any other!

Secondly, the work of the inner man is vision in knowing and loving. In this work lies the beginning of the holy life. These two activities define the nature of the soul. Doctors declare that every nature exists for the sake of its proper activity. Now since this nature (the soul) can be apprehended only in these two activities, therefore they are the noblest activities in man. I have said before that virtue is a mean between vice and perfection; now love is the form of virtue without which no virtue is virtue. Whensoever a person practises a virtue the works of the virtue are works of love, not of the person; each work of virtue having power in love to bring the person to God. St Dionysius says, it is the nature of love to change a man into that which he loves. Wherefore we ought so to live that our whole life is love. In this disposition all practices are praiseworthy, outward or inward. David says: 'They shall go from virtue to virtue, then shall the God of Gods be seen in Sion.' The vision of God transcends virtues. Virtue, as I said, is a mean between vice and perfection and the fruit of virtue—the end and object of virtue, that is to say—will never be obtained until the soul is caught up above the virtues. Be sure that as long as a man holds fast himself as thrall to virtue he will never taste the fruit of virtue, which is nothing else than seeing the God of Gods in Sion. God is not seen in Jacob, the practice of virtue, but God is seen in Sion. Sion

is as it were a polished mirror and stands for unveiled vision with the single eye of the divine nature. Rely upon it, virtue has never seen this sight.

Now it may be asked, are we to abandon virtue altogether? To which I answer: no, we are to practise virtue, not possess it. The perfection of virtue is freedom from virtues. Thus Christ says: 'When ye have done all that is possible to you, say: we are unprofitable servants.'

That is what is meant by the soul dying to her own works. The question we must now consider is how she loses her own nature. Doctors declare that everything made by God is ordered in such an excellent way that nothing can wish it did not exist. Yet the soul is to relinquish her existence. This means the death of the spirit. And in order to accomplish this death the soul must let go of herself and all things, retaining of herself and things no more than when she was not. Christ says: 'Except a corn of wheat die it abideth alone.' To die is to be wholly deprived of life, so that while a man lives, as long as there is life in him, be sure that he knows nothing of this death. St Paul says: 'I no longer live.' Some people interpret this death to mean that one must live neither in God nor in oneself nor yet in any creature. And so it does, for death is the loss of all life. But I say more: a man may be dead to everything, to God and creatures, yet if God still finds in his soul a place that he can live in, then the soul is not yet dead and gone out into that which follows created existence. For to die is, properly speaking, to lose everything. I do not say the soul is brought so utterly to naught as it was before it was created; this naughting applies to holding and possessing. In this respect the soul suffers total loss—God as well as creatures.

It sounds strange to say the soul must lose her God, yet I affirm that in a way it is more necessary to perfection that the soul lose God than that she lose creatures. Everything must go. The soul must subsist in absolute nothingness. It is the full intention of God that the soul shall lose her God, for as long as the soul possesses God, is aware of God, knows God, she is aloof from God. God desires to annihilate himself in the soul in order that the soul may lose herself. For that God is God he gets from creatures. When the soul became a creature she obtained a God. When she lets slip her creaturehood, God remains to himself that he is, and the soul honours God most in being quit of God and leaving him to himself.

This is the lowest death of the soul on her way to divinity. Such souls are hardly to be recognised for, as St Paul says: 'Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.' If it be ques-

tioned whether the unique virtue of these souls finds no outward expression, I answer: Yes, just as Christ, the pattern of perfection, was unindigent and a shining light to all mankind, so these men are turned towards humanity by reason of their selfless wisdom and godlike frame of mind.

So much for the first exodus in which the soul goes out of her creaturely nature seeking the kingdom of God.

Secondly, she must go out of the nature she has in her eternal prototype. Theologists teach that the prototype of the soul is the divine understanding. The divine understanding is the Person of the Son. Hence the Son is the exemplar of all creatures and the image of the Father in which image broods the nature of all creatures. Now when the soul strips off her created nature there flashes out its uncreated prototype wherein the soul discovers herself in uncreatedness, for things are all one in this prototype according to the property of the (eternal) image.

And now the soul fares forth out of this same prototype wherein she discovers her nature according to the uncreatedness of the image and this she does in the divine death. The soul is conscious that what she seeks is neither her exemplar nor its nature, wherein she perceives herself to be in multiplicity and separation. For this final attribute of divinity is multiplicity. And since the eternal nature wherein the soul now finds herself in her exemplar is characterised by multiplicity—the Persons being in separation—therefore the soul breaks through her eternal exemplar to get to where God is a kingdom in unity. One philosopher declares that the soul's breaking-through is more noble than her emanation. Now Christ says: 'No man cometh to the Father but through me.' Christ is the eternal exemplar. Though the soul's abiding-place is not in him yet she must, as he says, go through him. This breaking-through is the second death of the soul and is far more momentous than the first. Of it St John says: 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,' that is, in God.

O surpassing wonder! How can there be death in him who says of himself that he is the life? To which we answer: In the birth of the Son all creatures went forth receiving life and being, hence all things are lively imaged in the Son. Now when the soul returns again within she loses the Son. Theologists declare that when the Son returns to unity of nature he is neither Person nor its property: the Son is lost in the unity of the essence. Likewise I say concerning the soul: when the soul breaks through and loses herself in her eternal prototype that is the death the soul dies in God. St Dionysius says: 'When God exists not for the soul there exists not for her either the eternal prototype, her source.' Equality belongs to the soul in her exemplar, for the Son is equal

with the Father. But in that they are one in nature they are not equal, for equality resides in separation. Accordingly I say concerning the soul : if she is to enter the divine unity she must lose the equality she has in her eternal exemplar. Dionysius declares that the soul's supreme delight is the nothingness of her prototype. And a heathen philosopher says : ' God's naught fills everywhere and his aught is nowhere.' God's aught, then, is not discovered by the soul till she has come to naught as regards finding or being able to find herself, created or uncreated as we have shown her eternal prototype to be.

This is the second death and second exodus, the soul going forth out of the nature which is hers in her eternal prototype to seek the kingdom of God. ' He who desires to come to God,' says one philosopher, ' let him come with naught.'

The third nature out of which the soul goes is the exuberant divine nature energising in the Father. According to some theologists the Father always perceived within himself tokens of emanation before he brought forth the Word. They all agree that God the Father conceived his own nature in originating the eternal Word and all creatures. Doctors distinguish between nature and essence. Essence, in as far as it is active in the Father, is nature. The distinction is therefore a logical one. From God in activity all creatures look forth potentially. But this is not the summit of divine union so it is not the soul's abiding place.

It must be clearly understood that the soul has got to die to all the activity connoted by the divine nature if she is to enter the divine essence where God is altogether idle ; this highest prototype of soul beholds without means the essence of the Godhead absolutely free from activity. This supernal image is the paradigm whereto the soul is brought by her dying.

Now mark ! The Godhead, self-poised, is self-sufficient. God as Godhead transcends all that creature as creature ever comprehended or can ever comprehend. As St Paul says : ' God dwells in light inaccessible.' Now when the soul has gone out of her created nature and out of her uncreated nature wherein she discovers herself in her eternal prototype and, entering into the divine nature, still fails to grasp the kingdom of God, then, recognising that thereinto no creature can ever get, she forfeits her very self and going her own way seeks God no more ; thus she dies her highest death. In this death the soul loses every desire and image and all understanding and form and is bereft of any nature. And as God lives it is true that the soul, being spiritually dead, can no more manifest to any man any mode or image than the dead can stir being bodily dead. This spirit is dead and buried in the Godhead and the Godhead lives for none other than itself.

Ah, noble soul, prove thy nobility! But while it is the case with thee that thou lettest not go thine own self altogether to drown in the bottomless sea of the Godhead, verily thou canst not know this divine death. The wise man says: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning in his own way.' God possesses all things in his Godhead's way, not in the soul's way, for God never received creature nor can creature ever get to him, as creature.

Now when the soul has lost herself in every way, as here set forth, she finds herself to be the very thing she vainly sought. Herself the soul finds in the supernal image wherein God really is in all his Godhead, where he is the kingdom in himself. There the soul recognises her own beauty. Thence she must go out to get into her very self and realise that she and God are one felicity: the kingdom which, without seeking, she has found. As saith the prophet: 'I poured out my soul into myself.' That is the meaning of: 'Knowest thou not thyself thou fairest among women? Then go forth.' The soul has to go forth, as we have seen, in order to enter into herself, where she finds, without seeking, the kingdom of God. St Paul says: 'I reckon as worthless temporal suffering in comparison with the future glory which shall be revealed to us.'

Look you. I said of old, and say again, that I have now all that I shall possess eternally, for God in his felicity and in the fullness of his Godhead is enjoyed by my supernal prototype though this is hidden from the soul. As the prophet says: 'Indeed Lord, thou art a hidden God!' This treasure of God's kingdom is hidden by time and multiplicity by the soul's own activity and by her creaturehood. The more the soul departs from all this multiplicity the more God's kingdom is revealed in her. But the soul is not able for this without the help of grace. An she find it, it is grace that has aided her thereto, for grace is innate in her highest prototype. There the soul is God, using and enjoying all things God-fashion. There the soul no more receives either from God or creatures, for she is what she contains and takes all things from her own. Soul and Godhead are one: there the soul finds that she is the kingdom of God.

It may be asked what discipline best enables the soul to reach this end? I answer: This, that the soul remain in death, not shrinking from death. St Paul says: 'Christ was obedient to the Father even unto the death of the cross. Therefore he hath exalted him and hath given him a name above every name.' And I say about the soul: if she remain obedient to God in death he will exalt her likewise and will give her a new name above every name. For as the Godhead is apart from name and nameless

so also the soul, like God, is nameless, for she is the very same as he is. Christ said: 'Henceforth I call you not servants but friends, for all that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' 'A friend,' says a heathen, 'is a second self.' God became my second self that I might become his second self. And St Augustine declares: 'God became man that man might become God.' In God the soul receives a new life. In him she arises out of death into the life of the Godhead; here God pours into her his divine fullness, here she receives a new name which is above every name. For as St John says, 'we have passed from death unto life because we love.'

Such is the interpretation of Christ's words: 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.'

Now let us see how 'all things shall be added unto us.' We can take this in two ways: first, as meaning that whatever of perfection there is in things we shall find in that first kingdom. Secondly, that we must hold fast to perfection in all we do: a man's works should be wrought according to the law of God's kingdom. If any man acts in such a way that his deeds are able to demean him, be sure he is not acting according to the law of God's kingdom. When works are wrought according to humanity weeds and discord soon fall among them, but he whose work is wrought in the kingdom of heaven remains tranquil in every undertaking. 'And God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good,' say the scriptures. And I say concerning the soul, that all her acts are perfect as seen in the kingdom of heaven, for there all works are equal, my least is my greatest, and my greatest least. Humanly speaking they are imperfect, for works in themselves are manifold and lead to multiplicity, wherefore in respect of such one is nigh on the brink of discord. Hence Christ's words: 'Martha, Martha, thou troublest thyself about many things; one thing is needful.'

Of this be sure: to win perfection our activity must be of a nature so exalted that all our works are wrought as one act; and this must take place in the kingdom of heaven where man is God. There all things make divine response, there man is lord of all his works. Verily I say unto you: works wrought out of the kingdom of God are dead works but works wrought in the kingdom of God are living works. The prophet says: 'God as little loves his works as he is disturbed and changed by them.' And so with the soul when she works in accordance with the law of God's kingdom. People of this sort are always the same whether they work or whether they work not, for works give nothing to them and take nothing from them.

That is the meaning of: 'All things shall be added unto you.'

This is addressed to none but those who already know it as a live reality or who at least possess it as their heart's desire.

May it be revealed to us, So help us God ! Amen.

II[1]

THE NOBILITY OF THE SOUL

Whosoever would attain to the summit of his noble nature and to the vision of the sovran good, which is God himself, must have profoundest knowledge of himself and of things above himself. Thus he reaches the supreme. Beloved, learn to know thyself, it shall profit thee more than any craft of creatures. How to know thyself, of this now learn two ways.

First, see that thy outward senses are properly controlled. Reflect, as regards these outward senses, that to the eye evil presents itself no less than good. The ear is importuned by one as well as the other and so with the other senses. Wherefore it behoves thee strictly to confine thyself and with all diligence to those things which are good. So much for the outward senses.

Now turn to the inward senses or noble powers of the soul, lower and higher. Take the lower powers first. These are intermediate between the higher powers and the outward senses. They are excited by the outward senses : what the eye sees, what the ear hears, they offer forthwith to desire. This offers it again, in the ordinary course, to the second power, called judgment, which considers it and once more passes it on to the third power, reckoning or reason. In this way it is clarified before it arrives at the higher faculties. So exalted is the power of the soul that she can seize it minus form or image and carry it in this state up into her higher powers. Here it is stored in the memory, mastered in the intellect and consummated in the will. These are the superior powers of the soul and they are one in nature. What the soul does is done by this simple nature in her powers.

Now it may be asked, What is this nature of the soul ?—It is the consciousness (the spark or synteresis) in the soul, that is the impartible nature of the soul. So subtile is this nature of the soul that space might not exist at all for all it troubles her. For instance, if one has a friend a thousand leagues away, thither flows the soul with the best part of her powers, loving her friend there. St Augustine testifies to this. He says, ' The soul is where she loves rather than where she is giving life.' The simple nature of the soul is in no way hampered by place. So much for the nature of the soul.

Next consider her higher powers, so orderly appointed, so

[1] See also Greith, p. 114, etc. ; and Spamer, *Texte*, B. 2.

admirably adapted to their several functions albeit of one nature. Memory is the power of storing up what the other powers bring in, that is its function.—The second power is understanding. This is so exalted that in its understanding of the highest good, God namely, all the other powers must subserve it to the best of their ability.—The third faculty is will. It is lordly enough to bid what it will and forbid what it will not; from things it does not will it is altogether free. So much for the superior powers of the soul and the rôle assigned to each.

Doctors dispute as to whether understanding is the nobler or the will. The position is this. Understanding sees things beyond this mundane level, that is its prerogative. But to will alone are all things possible. As St Paul declares, 'I can do all things in God who strengtheneth me.' When understanding comes to the end of its tether, up soars the will transcendent in the light and power of faith. Here will surpasses understanding. This is the prerogative of will. But mind you, though the will is free to do and leave undone exactly as it will, this upward flight is not achieved by its own power alone: help comes from the other powers and from faith as well. What help we shall now see. The powers have in common their impartible nature, and to this is due the transcension of the will. The other powers are the cause of this transcension in virtue of identity of nature. That is one help.

Then comes the question, which is the power in the psychic trinity wherein faith first appears?—The middle one: it springs from understanding but it is fortified in will and will is fortified by faith. Thus the light of faith contributes to this ascent of will. That is the second help. And of still another it remains to tell. Intellect projects itself to hear and understand. It analyses, orders, synthesises. But even when working to perfection, always there is something on beyond which it cannot penetrate and which it recognises as belonging to a higher order. This it communicates to will, in their common nature, not in its individual capacity. This communication gives will an upward swing which displaces it into that higher order—always in their common nature. Here understanding is superior to will. But to will as individual a certain superiority belongs at the summit of its nature where it receives from the highest good, from very God.—What does it receive?—It receives grace and in grace the highest good itself. What soul receives she receives willingly or not at all. Not that will as such receives this light: to receive is not its part; but by the grace of the sovran good the other powers are strengthened in their common nature. This light is kindled in that second power, in the Holy Ghost. It is in this

light that all works are wrought in the soul. As Isaias says, 'All our works are wrought by God.' This light is gracious light, and any light outside this light is the light of nature. It is a sure sign of this light when of his own free will a person turns from mortal things to the highest good, God namely. We are in duty bound to love him for conferring on the soul such great perfection. When she has reached her limit of endeavour then will as such is free to leap over to that gnosis which is God himself. A somersault which lands the soul at the summit of her power. A marvel, truly, God has made from naught in the image of himself!

See now how the soul rises to sovran rank and to the zenith of her power. One master says, God is conveyed into the soul and there implanted. Whence there arises in the soul a divine love-spring which bears the soul back into God. Mark how. According to one holy man, 'Whatever we can say of God, that God is not.' According to another, 'Whatever we can say of God, God is.' And an eminent authority declares that both are right. With these three holy men even so I say, that when with her own understanding the soul receives divine understanding it is offered forthwith to her will. Will accepting it grows one with what it has accepted and finally takes it and puts it away in the memory. Thus God is conveyed and implanted in the soul. Then as to the divine love-spring. This overflowing in the soul causes her higher powers to flood the lower ones and the lower ones flood the outward man who, borne above all nether things, is incapable save of what is spiritual. As the spirit works by divine energy even so the outward man is driven by the spirit.

Oh wonder of wonders! When I think of the union of the soul with God! He makes the soul to flow out of herself in joyful ecstasy, for no named things content her. And since she is herself a nature named therefore she fails to content herself. The divine love-spring surges over the soul sweeping her out of herself into the unnamed being in her original source, for that is all God is. Creatures have given him names, but in himself he is nameless essence. Thus the soul arrives at the height of her perfection.

Further as concerns the noble nature of the soul. St Augustine says, 'As with God so with the soul.' Had God not made the soul in the likeness of himself, to be God by grace, she could never be God above grace. Her likeness to the pattern of the blessed Trinity we see by comparing her with God.

God is threefold in Person and onefold in his nature. God is in all places and in each place whole. In other words, all places are the place of God. And the same with her. God has prevision

of all things and everything is pictured in his providence. This is natural to God. And also to the soul. She too is threefold in her powers and simple in her nature. She too exists in all her members and in each member whole. So that all her members are the place of the soul. She too has foresight and imagines such things as she is able. To anything that we can predicate of God, soul has a certain likeness. Or, in the words of St Augustine, 'Like God like the soul.' God has endowed the soul with his own likeness which did she not possess she could not be God by grace nor above grace either; whereas in this likeness she is able to attain to being God by grace and also above grace. And she must equal him in divine love and divine activity. So much for the soul as being God by grace.

The soul who abides in this perfect likeness and in this noble nature God has given her, and at the same time rises to higher rank and higher, to her, what time she leaves the body, and at that very point, eternal life is open and in the opening she is encompassed with divine light, and enveloped in this divine light she is absorbed and transformed into God. Now each of the powers of the soul is endowed with the likeness of a divine Person: will receives the likeness of the Holy Ghost; understanding receives the likeness of the Son; memory the likeness of the Father and (her nature the likeness of the) divine nature withal remaining undivided.—That is as far as I can understand it.

In the third place let us see how the soul becomes God above grace. What God has given her is changeless for she has reached a height where she has no further need of grace. In this exalted state she has lost her proper self and is flowing full-flood into the unity of the divine nature. But what, you may ask, is the fate of this lost soul: does she find herself or not? My answer is, it seems to me that she does find herself and that at the point where every intelligence sees itself with itself. For though she sink all sinking in the oneness of divinity she never touches bottom. Wherefore God has left her one little point from which to get back to herself and find herself and know herself as creature. For it is of the very essence of the soul that she is powerless to plumb the depths of her creator. Henceforth I shall not speak about the soul, for she has lost her name yonder in the oneness of divine essence. There she is no more called soul: she is called infinite being.

Now I go on to speak about abstract knowledge of God. And I address myself to you, my brethren and my sisters, beloved Friends of God who are familiar with him and know something of the matter. I will start with the nomenclature of the holy Trinity. And here you will be called upon to follow an abstruse,

technical discussion. When we speak of the Father or the Son or the Holy Ghost we are speaking of the Persons. When we speak of the Godhead we are speaking of their nature. The three Persons, as Person and essence, flow with their essence into the essence wherein they are Godhead. Not that the Godhead is other than what they are themselves: they are the Godhead in their unity of nature. They flow in essence into the essence, both Person and essence, because essence is comprehended by nothing but itself. It is fast locked in stillness, comprehending itself with itself. This influx is, in the Godhead, the oneness of the three inseparate Persons. In this same flux the Father flows into the Son and the Son again into the Father (as our Lord Jesus Christ declares, 'He that seeth me seeth my Father. My Father is in me and I in him'), and they both flow into the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost back to them again. (As our Lord Jesus Christ says, 'I and my Father are one Spirit.') The Father utters his Son and in his Son tells forth himself to creatures as a whole, all in this flow. And the Father returning to himself speaks himself to himself: 'The fountain flows into itself,' as St Dionysius says. This proceeding in the Godhead is a speaking without words and without sound; a hearing without ears; a seeing without eyes. In this proceeding each Person wordlessly utters himself in the others. It is a flow where nothing flows. Compare with this the noble soul, which provides a striking likeness of this flow; for where her higher powers and her simple nature have the same property (hyparxis) they are flowing into each other, speaking themselves without word and without sound. Happy the soul who thus attains to the vision of eternal light!

But it may be questioned, what about their power? Is their power that of Person or of essence?—I answer that, the three are one God, no one is before or after the other: all three Persons are one *first* in the unity of their essential nature. Hence we speak of the activity of the blessed Trinity not of their essence. This is silence. Now speech, remember, beats into silence. In this sense the Persons are the hypostasis of essence.—But why call it a beat?—Because it is neither a coming nor a going. In this impulse the Trinity has equal power to act and has wrought its work entirely unmoved and undisturbed.

Examine, again, the statement, 'the Persons are the hypostasis.' This reveals two things. From the word *are* we gather that each Person is distinct in the Personality. But saying 'the hypostasis' argues the three Persons and one nature to possess one property. The Persons are the hypostasis of the essence since their unity and personality have like power to act. This power the holy Trinity possesses in the unity of its natural essence. There you

have the argument in full for the blessed Trinity having power in the unity of its divine nature.

Two things we attribute to God, essence and nature.—' I should much like to know the difference.'—Essence attracts and nature is common to the Persons : they are one.—' For God's sake, Sir, explain.'—Then follow with enlightenment, with mind attuned to the highest pitch. You see, God, whatever he is, has essence and essence is absolute stillness ; it is immoveable. It speaks not, loves not, gets not ; but it moves moveable things like creatures. Immoveability and motion do not represent (the divine nature) and the divine Persons : Persons and nature have one property. (Immoveability) distinguishes the essence. But what the divine nature is, of that no single drop did ever fall within the ken of any creature. According to one philosopher, ' God's nature is God's beauty.' And to this I add that in this same beauty there is play of light and its reflection, each Person radiant to the rest as to itself. This illumination is the perfection of beauty.—' Good. I am quite satisfied with that. But now I want to ask about the eternal Word of the Father : is it to be taken as abiding within in his essence ? '—No.—' Is it to be taken in his Person ? '—No.—' Then is it to be taken as being in the abstract nature of the Father ? '—St Augustine, speaking as it were in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, gives for it five analogies : ' I am come as a word from the heart that is spoken therefrom ; I am come as the light from the sun ; I am come as the heat from the fire ; I am come like the fragrance of a flower ; I am come like the stream from its perennial spring.' Even so is the eternal Word uttered in the Person of the Son while remaining God by nature in his nature. That is the answer.

—' Now another question. Theologians say God is in everything. Is God in everything in his nature ? '—No.—' Is God in everything in Person ? '—No.—' Then how is he in everything ? ' —As preserving their unity of nature, Persons and nature have but one property and this property is the divine essence as a whole. As such God is in all places and in each place God is all at once. For since God is impartible, all things and all places are the place of God. So everything is full of God, of his divine essence, continually.

Three things are to be noted about the divine essence. First and foremost, it is the principle preserving all things ; in his divine essence God is in all things upholding them. But he is in the soul innately. Witness our Lord Jesus Christ : he was God and man. He has given us his sacred body : whoso receives it worthily receives at once the Person of the Son and divine nature ; he receives human nature joined with divine nature. For he is

really present where he is worthily received. This accounts for God's loving himself in the soul.

It may be asked, how does God love himself?—God is in all things, for he is with himself. God is with himself for love of himself. Hence God loves himself with himself in all things.—Secondly, God is one alone; hence it is from itself not from another. Were it from another it would reveal the thing from whence it came. Not so: it is by itself in stillness so profound it cannot of itself reveal anything at all. And here it may be noted that although God is potent for good yet it may be maintained that his greatest power is his impotence. The argument runs thus. The impartible essence of divine nature is unity. Now unity cannot reveal itself to itself. That is its impotence and this impotence is the unity itself: the unity which is God's chief potentiality. Whence also the deduction that the three Persons have like power in their natural essence. And since this cannot manifest itself therefore the three Persons have manifested it and to none more than to themselves, for it is their own essential nature.—Thirdly, it unifies and embraces all things in itself and in this embrace the Father loses his name although he preserves his paternity of Person. That is one Person. And the same with the other Persons. In this embrace all is dissolved in all for all encloses all. But in itself it is self-disclosed.

Here arises the question how the first embraces all? The answer is this. Things flowed forth finite into time while abiding infinite in eternity. There they are God in God. Take an illustration. Suppose some master of the arts. If he produce a work of art he none the less preserves his arts within himself: the arts are the artist in the artist. Even so *the first* contains the idea of all things, which is God in God.

Then there is the question of how all things return into their first source? The answer is this. Creatures all change their names in human nature and become ennobled; in human nature they lose their own particular nature and find their way back into their cause. There are two ways of doing this. First, it is feasible for human nature to scale the heights by ghostly toil, for in spiritual travail the soul ascends to whence it came. That is one way. But there is another. The meat and drink a man consumes turns into flesh and blood. Now it is the Christian faith that this actual body will rise at the last day. Then things shall all arise, not as themselves but in him who has changed them into himself. He, spiritualised and turned to spirit, shall flow in spirit back to his first cause. From this it may be argued that every single creature has, in human nature, a stake in the eternal. Furthermore it argues the faithfulness and kindness and perfect

love of God who refuses to shut out any belonging of his faithful servant: he takes him all together to himself. All embraces all, for all is one and one is all in all.

Then there is the question how the Person of the Son was sent into Mary's virgin body and took on human nature without his ever quitting the shelter of his Father's bosom? The answer is as follows: The bosom of the Father is the throne of God. The Father has given birth to his Son, is now giving him birth and shall go on giving him birth without stopping. This birth has been taking place in him for ever. At the very instant when the Son was donning human nature the Father was bringing him to birth. That is one explanation. Or take it in another way: the Son is the understanding of the Father and the architect of all things in his Father. Had this architect not wrought in his Father without ceasing the Father had not wrought at that particular point. So God's Son while taking on man's nature in Mary's body was the architect of all things in his Father. That is another explanation. Or take it, thirdly, in yet another sense. The Son has no less of the essence than the Father or the Holy Ghost, with whom he possesses it in common. And in the community of their essential nature the Son himself is the encloser. Unity is the close, the Persons what the one encloses. Each Person in the utterance keeps his individual nature. But within this close the three Persons have one nature. The Son has his nature in common with the Father and with the Holy Ghost so that as therein contained he has with them one common property. It follows that the Son has never for one instant left the Father. And herewith I conclude this threefold argument. It demonstrates conclusively that God has never waxed or waned in divine glory.—So much of theology and of the noble lineage of the soul.

Now we will speak about the union of the soul with God. There are those who say, nothing unites the soul so much as knowledge. Others again aver the same of love. And yet a third school teaches that nothing unites like use (*i.e.* actual enjoyment). Now I put one question regarding these three things. What is the property of each? Each is its own peculiar property. But at the summit of its property (its nature) each of them approaches so closely to the rest that they are virtually the same: threefold yet one in nature. This, to be sure, is not strictly true, but in the higher reaches of their nature, where they are verging on each other, knowledge enhances love and love enjoyment. Each one, however, does its own appropriate work. Knowledge raises the soul to the rank of God; love unites the soul with God; use perfects the soul to God. These three transport the soul right out of time into eternity. There the spirit in perfect freedom

enjoys in its origin the height of bliss. Love and the sweetness of its uses have lured forth the soul to its naked spark. What is her fortune there? All I can say is this: the glance, out of the spirit, which pierces without stop into naked Godhead; the flow, out of the Godhead, into the naked spirit, these are but one form which conforms and unites the spirit to God in form and oneness so that it receives as like from like. How spirit fares in this exalted state I know not, nor can I tell at all more than to say that the spirit is then at the summit of its power and its welfare is supreme.

Peradventure you will say, 'It is all very well to talk, my friend, but how do I arrive at this exalted state you have described?'—See. God is what he is and what he is is mine and what is mine I love and what I love loves me and absorbs me and what absorbs me that I am rather than my own self. By loving God therefore ye may become God with God. But I will not pursue this subject further.

Now I want to say a little about the virtuous life so that you may have some guide to its attainment. Whosoever would attain to God must make him some return for all his godly works. He who would atone to God must needs possess one virtue: righteousness (or justice). This is the epitome of all the virtues. He must be bare and free within and without. What is the freedom of a godly man? Being absolutely nothing to and wanting absolutely nothing for himself but only the glory of God in all his works. Mark two degrees of freedom in the willing poor. First they abandon friends and worldly goods and honours and descend into the valley of humility. There the willing poor find outward freedom and dwell unsolaced by perishable things. Follow the scorn and bitterness of the world. Courage, my children, establish yourselves in the valley into which ye have gone down. If the sons of the world revile you waver not; stand fast in Christ remembering and acting on his words, 'The servant is not greater than his lord; if the world hate you, know, it hated me before it hated you!' Accept it all from God with hearty thanks and deem yourselves all unworthy of it; then, only then, have ye renounced yourselves.

Then again there is ghostly freedom. He is in this sense free who finds within himself no sort of sin or imperfection. More free is he who cleaves to nothing that has name nor it to him. Still freer is the man who works not for reward from God but solely for God's glory. And most free of all, one who forgets himself and flows with all he is into the bottomless abyss of his first cause. This is the case of those willing poor who have descended into Humble Valley. They verily obey the precept of

our Lord, ' If any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me.' From such as have denied themselves to follow after God in genuine poverty how can God refrain ? he must pour out his grace into those souls who thus in love have undone themselves. He pours his grace into them filling them full and in his favours he bestows himself. With his own self does God adorn the soul like gold adorned with a precious stone. Thereafter he leads on the soul to the beholding of his Godhead. In eternity this happens, not in time. Although in time she has a foretaste of it in what is here described of the virtuous life. This I have told so ye may know that none achieves the crown and summit of his nature, knowing and loving, excepting by the path of willing poverty, of being like these poor. That is for all the best.

Now praising God for his eternal goodness we pray him to receive us at the last. So help us Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

III

THE RANK AND NATURE OF THE SOUL

When God created the soul he fell back upon himself and made her after his own likeness. Meister Eckhart of Paris says, God made nothing like himself besides the soul. Thus we can give no shape to God nor can we to the soul, and as God is immortal so did he make the soul. The soul is not dependent upon temporal things but in the exaltation of her mind is in communication with the things of God, hence her prodigious capabilities, and it amazes me that, being so like God and of such perfection and with such a powerful word of her own, the soul is still unable to speak the same as God. Some say it is because what is innate in God is not so in the soul : God is his own being and gets this from himself, but what the soul is that she gets from God and when she issues forth from him she does not keep his nature : she takes another nature, a descendent of divinity. So she does not behave the same as God : God moves all things in heaven and earth and gives life to all, and the soul moves the body, giving life to every limb so that it sees, hears, feels and walks and talks although the mind may be elsewhere. St Gregory observes, ' We cannot see the visible except with the invisible ' : the eye sees nothing corporal, lacking the a-corporal thing which quickens it to sight. Subtract the mind, *i.e.* the soul which is invisible, and the eye is open to no purpose, which before did see. God has formed the soul to himself and with himself and in himself ; of time and in time and timely, and no soul can get into God without first being God as she was before she was made into God. Nothing but God finds its way into

God, and once the soul is in God she is God, borne into God on his eternal Word. Soul is the mean 'twixt God and creature; she is placed at the beginning and end of the supreme, in touch with common knowledge and with the consolation the angels bring to her from God. If she prefers the inferior powers of her five senses to her higher ones whence comes her knowledge of celestial things, then she grows ignoble and base. The creature pleasures of the soul God has no stomach for, and when she realizes this she discards the joys in which God has no share.

While the soul is still here, in sleep, she drives away the angels, and refusing any longer to serve creature she conceives herself all one with God. St Augustine says the soul is nobler, mightier, grander than any creature, but the angels are by nature of still higher rank, for they are the first issue of the breath of God which gives life to them. Gregory, again, observes that 'The soul God has appeared to, who has some inkling of him, finds creatures all so narrow and so vain.'—While the higher powers of the soul are holding fast to God she actuates her lower powers so that what occurs in these comes to the knowledge of the higher ones. The highest power of the soul is called an inextinguishable light because of the vision the soul has in this power. However far away her power is from God she can discern God always. Her power is never so much out but that it still burns somewhat, enough to be a danger-signal to the soul and, even were she spiritually dead in sin, a beacon showing her the way to come alive again and arise in true sorrow and repentance.

Here comes the question, Can the soul with her own powers comprehend her highest happiness? The answer given to this question by the four doctors, Thomas, Egidius, Henricus and Albertus is, that if the soul had her knowledge of herself, as she has her being, image-free, then she would be able to take in her highest happiness, she being an infinite capacity which God cannot fill excepting with himself. St Augustine says, If her own perfect nature were immediately present to the soul she would be her proper self rather than creature in her nature, as she is classified. For God is spirit and he en-spirits the soul who, in her spiritual nature, belongs to an order above creatures; she finishes with creature in the perfect image of the eternal birth which is directly formed in her.

Another question is, How does God enter the soul? Is he innate in her, sustaining her with his intrinsic energy and providing her with life and being? One theory is that God enters the soul in three ways. First in his grace whereby a man being gratified is filled with the desire of perfecting virtue as a whole, mingled with alarm lest any creature ever filch it from him.

Secondly, God enters the soul in pure perception wherein a man beholds himself and learns to know himself and answer any call God may make upon him, be it suffering or trials, bodily or mental. Thirdly, God enters the soul in true freedom, liberating man from all the cares of life. Let the soul bid him welcome, refusing to be satisfied save with him alone. At the highest point of his inner self, his soul, man is more God than creature : however much he is the same as creature in his nature, in mind he is like God more than any creature. To the soul at rest in God in her potential, her essential, intellectual nature, everything comes natural as though she were created not at the will of something else but solely at her own. In this point creatures are her subjects, all submitting to her as though they were her handiwork. It was in this power the birds obeyed St Francis and listened to his preaching. And Daniel took refuge in this power, trusting himself to God alone, when he sat among the lions. Moreover, in this power it has been the custom of the saints to offer up their sufferings which, in the greatness of their love, are to them no suffering.

Dionysius says the soul has got to purify herself till in her perfect clarity she is like the angels and receives by grace what the angels have by nature. For the soul will not be able to fulfil her destiny till she is like the angels in whom is no sin. But the soul is from heaven (that is to say, from God who is the heaven of the soul) and body from the earth, so they are ever opposed to one another. And that is why the soul, wanting to get back to God whence she issued forth, absconds and leaves behind her all the things which are not God and do not lead to God. All form and likeness, Dionysius says, God in the first instance imprinted in the lesser angels so that they should inform the soul with divine light and consolation and enable her to enter into her own solitude, God namely, wherein no creature can ever look and see.

Theologians say the soul is more greatly blest when God begets himself in her without corporal union than the body of Christ is without his Godhood and without his soul. But any beatific soul is a nobler thing than Christ's mortal body, for the interior birth of God within the soul is the final consummation of her happiness, a happiness more real to her than Christ's becoming man since this profits the soul nothing without union with God. As Dionysius says, ' Beatitude means an in-dwelling with God such that he is more present to the soul than she is to herself, and the soul can apprehend him best when she approaches him with a tranquil mind.' For in peace is his habitation and in peace he elected us his children. But as God is the mover in the starry and revolving heavens so here in the soul he is the mover of the freedom of our will towards himself and towards all good things :

it is in his light that she sees the light and in his light she will be united with the light. Theologians say that in their own nature the angels in heaven are nobler than the soul of Christ or Mary because they are in essence nearer than the soul to God. But by merit Christ's soul has more joy than all the angels and is nearer God than any angel. And the same with Mary's soul. Not by nature though, for by nature Christ's soul, and Mary's too, is the same as mine or any other human soul. Further, theologians teach that the soul in man is more than thousandfold, for it is whole in every limb : in the fingers, in the eyes and in the heart and in every several portion of each member large and small. Just as in the eighth heaven, where there are so many stars, there is one angel who revolves that heaven and exists entire in each star. When God created man he safeguarded him against all ills ; the golden chain of destiny coming from the Trinity to the highest power of the soul and running also through her lower powers subordinates them to the higher so that no fell disorder can attack either the body or the soul excepting he transgress this law. In her higher powers the soul is spirit and in her lower, soul ; and betwixt soul and spirit is the bond of one common being.

Also you must know that in the soul there exists one power which rests not day or night ; it is flowing from the Spirit and is altogether ghostly, and in this power God comes out in the full flower of his joy and glory, as he is in himself. Such intense delight, such supreme exaltation as no mind can conceive nor tongue express. Were he always recollected in this power a man would never age. Nay more I say : should he in this power catch but one fleeting glance of the joy and bliss therein, it would be happiness enough to make amends though he suffered all things.

The soul receives four things from God in her power of understanding. First, the entire certainty of freedom, of riddance, from all creatures, which God objects to in her. Next, the full enjoyment of God while she abides in the power of love. Third, the complete protection of God against all harm from creatures. Fourthly, victory in this power over all her foes. For as the Son of God, so also is the soul, and the promise of the Son is the promise of the soul, only she is not suspended from where the Son issues from the Father. Fire and heat are one ; taste and tasted are one, albeit far asunder. The Word God speaks eternally lies hidden in the soul so that one neither knows of it nor hears it. Dionysius says the soul resembles the procession in the Godhead since the higher powers of the soul have her nature common to them and each power flows into the rest. For the soul to rise

to spirit she must betake herself to her eternal part, never failing to remember that, by the grace of God, hers is an imperishable nature and capable of eternal bliss. Her spirit is suspended from the unchanging God, so neither life nor death nor height nor depth nor angel nor man nor any creature can loose her steadfast hold on God: the soul who dies in God is also buried in him and beyond the ken of creatures just as much as God is beyond their ken. As Dionysius says, when the soul considers the greatness of God's might beside her littleness she casts herself out of herself and out of every creature and thus reduced to naked nothingness, God keeping her in his power, she persists simply in the grace of God. God is concerned solely with himself; he is to each thing absolutely whole. And the soul should be the same: what God is by nature she must be by grace: detached and free from creatures, abandoning all things to God as though they were not. In a soul like this all that survives is God: his uncreated Breath is what the soul draws in inspiration, and she is spirit to all things and all things spirit to her, the eternal spiration of the Holy Ghost. Vicentius the philosopher observes, 'The spirit detached is of such perfection that what it sees is real, what it wills comes true and its commands must be obeyed.'

It must be remembered that when the free spirit stands in perfect isolation it constrains God to itself, and if it could subsist as form devoid of accident it would have all the character of God. But this God grants to none beside himself; the utmost God can do is to give himself to him, and such an one is so far raised up to eternity that nothing temporal can move him, nothing material affect him; he is dead to the world, as St Paul says, 'I live not: Christ liveth in me.'

According to Dionysius, death in God is nothing but the uncreated life, that is, God himself, not now called the soul but the sovran power of God, because with it he performs his will. What the five senses get from such a soul she gives the whole of to her inner man whenever he embarks upon some high adventure, and such an one is then nonsensical (or senseless), his object being the rational, a-sensible idea. Dionysius comments on the dictum of St Paul, 'There be many that run for the crown but it falls to none but the wise.' This race, he says, is nothing else than the flight from creatures to union with their uncreated God. The soul, in hot pursuit of God, becomes absorbed in him, and she herself is reduced to naught, just as the sun will swallow up and put out the dawn. St Augustine says, 'The soul has a private door into divine nature, where for her all things amount to naught.' And, 'The flavour of the spirit spoils the taste for flesh'; and, 'The soul at her summit is ignorant with knowing, for in the oneness of

the spirit those that have abandoned everything to God are as he had them when we existed not.' The Lord Jesus stands before the soul as the perfect pattern for our human conduct. But the subjective aspect of the three Persons—Godhead, mind—no creature ever saw, not soul nor angel nor the humanity of Christ, in its own nature. Yet it is held by some, and Meister Eckhart of Paris notably, maintains in the teeth of all objections: As surely as you know me for a man so surely God gives birth to his own nature in the ground of my soul as in his heaven, and I am not happy till I return to God discarding every means of sin and all its brood together with all creatures. For in the selfsame ground wherein the Father bears his Son in his own nature therein am I born. In the soul that has trodden underfoot all the ills of time the Father naturally will beget his Son as surely as my father gat me a living man. In the very ground wherein the Father gets his Son therein does he get me and all whom the Father draws to him by grace. And as God in himself is absolutely free from things so I am there by grace what God is by nature. God destines all of us to such a glorious lot as few indeed can credit who have not gone out of themselves. If God gave the soul his whole creation she would not be filled thereby but only with himself: he is the very highest uncreated heaven of all the heavens in God's nature. That the soul in us is deathless is not our doing but God's: it is the nature of her. But union comes by grace, the highest stooping down to inform the lowest, and therein lies our hope of future sight.

The soul ascends from corporal things and, being caught up above herself, abides within herself, first, for the sake of the delights she finds in God. For the divine perfection invests her in him with his likeness. His fullness is poured forth without stint: angels more in number than the sands and grass and water-drops and every single angel with his own distinctive nature, not one the same as any other.—Secondly, the soul ascends for the sake of the purity she finds in God; things in him are all quite pure and noble, but once they issue forth from him into the nearest creatures there is all the difference between aught and naught.—Thirdly, the soul ascends for the recollection she enjoys in God. In order to grasp God she must have a wont that is higher than herself; though God had made a thousand earths and a thousand heavens the soul could comprehend them all in her one power, the active power's reflection. But she cannot conceive God in the act of making her in his own image.—Fourthly, the soul ascends for the sake of the infinite good things she enjoys in God: all things in him are ever new in his Son who to-day is being born the same as though his Father had never given him

birth. And as God is flowing into the soul she is flowing back into God.

The soul takes four steps into God. On turning to God, at first she feels afraid of his magnificence. Her next step is to overcome this fear and conceive the hope of God's affection. Her third step brings the vehement desire, she hails it as the promise, of the infinite embrace wherein she is embraced by God.— At the fourth step she falls into such deep oblivion she never thinks of leaving what she has found in God. God made the soul for his only Son to be born in her. And when and where soever there befalls this birth it gives God greater pleasure than the creation of the heavens and earth because the soul is nobler and bigger than the heavens. As there is wedlock between a man and wife so there is wedlock between God and the soul. The head power in the soul is the man and the lowest is his wife. The man in the soul always stands bareheaded and the woman veiled, the lower power being caught up to the highest of the soul. First God begets his likeness in the soul and afterwards himself as he is in eternity. God's Son is the soul's Son: in him God and the soul have the same Son, that is, God. Once this birth has happened in the soul she is fit for God, and the oftener this birth befalls the more at home the soul will be in God, in his paternal heart.

The soul has two feet, understanding and love. And the more she knows the more she loves. Who shall cause her to fall, she being upheld by the sustainer of all creatures? Grace lending wings to desire she is borne out of herself, and by grace and in grace she is borne into grace and past grace into God her first cause where in blissful union her lot is good beyond compare. There every sense is dumb; the soul's will and God's will are confused with one another, the two wills love-locked in the true atonement. Now the soul does neither more nor less than the work of God, for there no longer lives in her anything but God. As the soul cries in the Book of Love, 'I have run the whole world round and have found no end to it. Wherefore I have cast myself into the solitary point of my one God who has wounded me with his glance.' Whom this glance did never wound, his soul was never pierced with the love of God. St Bernard says, 'To the spirit that feels this glance it is ineffable; to him that feels it not it is incredible.' 'Tis an arrow sped without anger and received without pain; thence starts the pure and limpid stream of healing grace which opens the inner eye to perceive in blissful beholding the delights of this divine affliction wherein we enjoy unheard-of spiritual favours, things never told nor preached of nor yet described in any book.

The soul must give up idle thoughts and worldly cares and corporal pleasures and find her way into his hiding-place whom the

heaven of heavens is not able to contain. God's comfort is only for that soul who scorns all temporal consolations ; and the more she runs from creatures the faster their creator comes and makes her one with him. Dionysius says, love takes the soul out of herself and identifies her with the object of her love, making her insensible and reckless of herself so long as she can do the will of her best-beloved. The powers of the soul, those of her spiritual mind, are celestial in the sense that they do celestial work ; thus the first power receives, the second one perceives and the third one loves. When the soul, conceiving God, is using in recollection her mnemonic power and, in beholding, her intelligence, then love transports her into the midst of God, the point at which there is eternal rest. The Father abiding in the soul clasps her to his heart, and in this fatherly embrace she conceives the Son in his personal procession and hence divines his presence with the Father in his essence ; as saith the Lord, ' I will lead her into the desert,' meaning, he will lead the soul away from vanity and say his say, his only Son, in her. And in this same begetting of his Son they pour their holy Breath into the soul, informing her of all things. Any act of soul that is to share in the eternal meed must be wrought in God. However good an act is in itself, excepting it be wrought in God, it meets with no reward from him who does not pay by length or size or multitude of works but for their being done in God, soul being the material God works in. In this divine alliance she is highly honoured, for what God is by nature she is made by grace. But if a soul presents herself before her bridegroom Jesus Christ without the ordinary virtues, forgetting to prepare herself in this respect for heaven, her shall he cast out into the pit of hell, there to realize his justice just as much in suffering as St Peter did in heaven his eternal joy. Her true bridegroom Jesus Christ comes to the soul and shows her in his visible humanity his divine affection in order that all creatures may do homage to our nature which has been exalted higher than the angels. We cannot imagine him creating any creature nobler than ourselves. His manhood satisfies our sense as his Godhood does our soul. As St Augustine says, we shall end with our soul in the Godhead, and our bodily senses in the humanity of Christ which is exalted above the saints and angels to where, in its unchanging nature, no creature can attain. When the watching soul is warned by various signs of the coming of her king, everything in her rejoices, and it is his royal right to use his sovran power to fulfil the expectation of the soul who longs for him to buttress her against her outward senses lest by yielding to them in the least she should bring about in any creature something counter to the will of God. The surest way to friendship with the king is for the soul blindly to

follow where God leads. If the soul, which rather than the body constitutes us man, if the soul, I say, would only obey all God's intimations she would overcome every obstacle with ease and rejoice in the burdens borne for him. And when she finds herself with nothing to correct she will be free with perfect freedom from opinion. It is the mark of the God-loving soul that from the moment she goes into his service she never follows her own will as distinct from his. God is the one thing that needs nothing and that all things need. And when the soul, beholding herself from within, perceives herself by grace omnipotent she stays in her own ideal nature.

The soul observes concerning God, first, that she has intuition of him who is to come to her. Next, she is in essential union with him who is operating in her. Thirdly, she enjoys him who so richly entertains her at his table. Fourthly, he provides her with a refuge where she is at peace. Dionysius says, 'When the soul returns to God her idea of herself in God is that, except for self-awareness, nothing survives in her but God.' When the soul does this she still keeps in touch with her outward man whom she supplies with his natural life. By speaking himself into the soul God unites himself with her and makes the soul into himself, giving her such great ability, it seems to her that being here in time is her only obstacle to good. In the virtuous uses of her examplar mind, all things being present to the soul in this interior Word of God, her spirit converses with God freely in proportion to the clearness of the Father's inspiration. It is important then for the soul to know what behaviour to adopt towards God so that she may discover the practices that draw from God his intimations. For this the loving soul must love God more than anything, who, descending into her and energising in her with his spirit, gives her to understand that the interior love she has from him she ought to have and show towards all mankind; and the soul should submit herself to God as though he suffered death for her alone. So doing she will wax in truth and fit herself to receive the universal gift of God whereby she will arrive at the truth of the humanity of Christ. But if she does not do her best she puts herself on a material level with the brutes, that must be spurred to great exertion; yet the sorriest of men, who are always bound to fall short of God, Christ wrought more deeds of love for than all the saints have ever done for love of him. Though all creatures were to speak they could never tell the perfection God confers on man, especially the soul, than which he neither could nor would make any nobler creature. This he proves in his own Person, with its common boundary between his divine and human natures. It follows that the soul ought to shun all creatures as things unworthy

of her whereby she may be lured from the things she is destined to by God, and she ought to be ashamed if, being within reach of his eternal good, she should fail to grasp it.

Here there is the question, If the soul is of such high estate that time and place and nature are powerless to move or even touch her in her essential self, does God then work in her without any image of himself? To this theologists reply, Granting the soul is creature and has a spiritual nature it follows of necessity that what God does in her is wrought essentially and free from all contingency; for his works are all essential and eternal as they are in himself, and the soul participates them in her nature above grace. Grace is the outflowing light designed for the service of the spirit; grace would not be a light had it no recognised spiritual mission. At the point where God enters the soul in love she is no more known than the highest angel is to her and loves all things God-fashion without any natural idiosyncrasy. God is abstract intellectual essence, eternal in itself, whereas the soul is made eternal. The soul is no more to be grasped in images and forms than God in words and names. The soul is one in nature with and subject to the laws of the authentic intellect of God, a monad so perfectly balanced in itself no creature can find room there.

The Lord Jesus said to his disciples, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' These words teach us two important facts. First, that the soul is by nature made for heaven and God is her lawful heritage. For God brought forth the soul alone in unbroken line and no man knoweth what she is. Every man has got a soul, but what she actually is there is no telling here in time. St Augustine says, the soul is sent from God and returns to God and she cannot rest except in him; for God is spirit and soul is also spirit and germane to God as one spirit to another. And they compare the soul with fire, most lofty in its nature, most mighty in its operation, which never rests until it licks the skies. Fire envelops all the elements, spreading further and wider and higher than the air, than water or the earth, so that it surrounds the rest and coming next the heavens turns round with them. The soul is called a fire because in her desire she keeps up with God, like fire with the heavens and can find no rest except in him. Again, the soul is dubbed a spark of celestial nature because one has already ascended into heaven, the soul, to wit, of Jesus Christ, which shows the common resting-place of souls is nowhere else than heaven. But unless the soul has turned from temporal to celestial things the Holy Ghost cannot enter in to do its work in her. All God's work is wrought in spirit. God is high and man is low: to rise to him in prayer he has to hoist himself by putting under him God's creatures, all of them, including the powers of the soul which end in the functions

of the body, then she will have the love and knowledge to carry her above the world. For to know God I want no eyes or ears ; for union with God in love I want no hands or feet : I want to withdraw myself from all created things and let my spirit swoon into God's spirit and be one spirit with God ; withal it was the love God bears my soul that prevailed with him to create all creatures and therein reveal to her his glory. And albeit he made creatures glad, he mixed therewith some sorrow, that anyone careless of his honour might be whipped and spurred with pain. Marvellous as the mind of man are the ways of God, drawing one to him with pleasure and another with the buffets of ill-fortune ; witness the amazing conversion of St Paul on his way to persecute the Christians, notwithstanding which his soul was caught up into the third heaven. And the very day St Augustine was converted he refused to be appeased with the extraordinary pleasure he felt in the security God sent into his soul to turn her to him.

Three things keep the soul from being content with creatures. In the first place they are partial. In the second, they are corporal : emblems of stagnation and corruption and unprogressiveness. Thirdly, the gift of creatures is no largesse of him from whom she first came forth (*i.e.* from God), so they are not relished by souls who have been caught up into bliss ; but God the Lord lures souls to him just as the lambs are lured from one spot to another by green pasture. Though all psychic powers lay in a single soul she could not here receive the very least reward of the smallest act decreed by God in his eternal love without the soul melting and dying to the body. Not so, however, when she gets the whole reward, namely God himself. But for this the soul must transcend herself and creatures and enter into the divine estate, into her divine exemplar nature ; for the soul contacts eternity with her higher powers and with her lower, creatures, which often lead her into evil. Could the soul see God as clearly as the angels do she would never have come into the body. God is formed in the image of himself, after a pattern of his own, and when she mingles with him in actual intuition, the soul resembles him in form, for he conforms her to him : divine light streams into the soul confusing her with God like one light with another and this is called the light of faith, the divine virtue. Where the soul with her powers and her passions is forbidden to go, there faith can take her ; and when in this power God is apprehended in the soul she acquires the virtue of hope wherein the soul becomes so intimate with God she fancies there is nothing in God beyond her reach. St Augustine says, ' The pears I stole, these were to me far sweeter than the ones my mother bought, because they were private and forbidden fruit.' And so is that grace sweeter to the

soul which she conceives in wisdom than that which is common to mankind. The soul must serve God here with her lower powers and in eternity with her higher ones, for she is not made of time nor of eternity: she is made from naught of the nature of them both. Leaning to the temporal she is unstable; keeping to the eternal she is strong and stable and superior to change.

The bridegroom of the soul is the Lord Jesus of sevenfold likeness. First, in his beauty with which the sun is nothing to compare, for it is not self-luminous: God provides the light wherewith it lights the air. And his bride should be the same in thought and word and deed. For this God has to brighten all her tarnishes of sin, making luminous the place of her abode.—Secondly, her Lord is of noble lineage: in heaven he has a Father but no mother and on earth a mother but no father, parentage too strange for any mind to grasp. And his bride, the soul, by birth adorns a rank higher than anything inferior to God.—Thirdly, her Lord is immensely rich: heaven and earth belong to him with all the creatures in it. Accordingly his bride, the soul, may freely confide her every care to him and have no doubt of his providing, for he is readier to give than we are to receive.—Fourthly, his wisdom is so lucid, it lights the ground of every heart and nothing is hidden from his eyes. Wherefore his bride, the soul, must be very careful not to do anything she thinks may be displeasing in his sight.—Fifthly, his power is prodigious; by it all things have come to be and are preserved in being. And his bride, the soul, has corresponding hope in times of trouble or in any kind of suffering or struggle. For what she cannot do he can to whom all things are possible.—Sixthly, he is sweet-tempered. He is called in the scriptures a lamb without blemish, for he is free from anger and bears no resentment. Likewise the soul, his bride, must be gentle, kind and patient in whatever he shall send her to his glory.—Lastly, her Lord, Jesus Christ, has eternal health and deathlessness. And the soul, his bride, should be cheerfully indifferent to disease, not caring for anything so much but she would always be as glad to do without as keep it, just as her bridegroom pleases, and finding no pain so hard to bear but she would suffer it as lief as not. God's justice to her is as precious as his mercy. This soul is just as pleased with God's gifts to others as herself.

It is written, 'The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God' who keeps them too tightly to his sides to be gotten out. Also he made them separate as his handiwork; their guerdon in eternal life, himself; for God alone did make the soul, unhelped by any creature; in power according to his might; in intellect according to his wisdom and according to his goodness in her will, as he from

eternity knew how to make her mighty in his power and blessed in his infinite good. The soul is not made of the nature of God but in the image of the Holy Trinity, and being bound to God by love alone she, seeking perfect rest in him, proclaims her fitness to be his pleasant temple. He went into his temple and drove out the buyers and the sellers, commanding them, Take these things hence. So he made it known that he would have the temple of the soul swept clean, with nothing in it but himself alone. The soul should take example by the angels who disregard all outward things and are without intention except to do the perfect will of God. So bent are they upon the will of God, upon its being done in them, that were it to pick nettles or anything like that, they would do it with a will, as though their whole happiness depended on it.

Any soul devoted thus to the will of God and seeking not her own Jesus takes delight and will work wonders in. When she goes out of her own will all things go in with Jesus and she becomes so full of light that God alone rivals her in splendour. For though the angels do to some extent resemble the soul in the joys of the hereafter, they have a limit set which they cannot pass beyond. The soul can transcend it in good works, and having once, in grace, drawn level here with the highest angel, her will, free now from all good works, carries her incalculably higher than the angels, provided she can leave her body.

The uncreated God alone is free and the soul's virgin nature is the same but not her creature nature: it was she who chose to come to naught, but it is left to God to fetch her back. For Jesus to be in the soul she has to recollect herself and be quiet and listen to his Word. When her spirit is receiving power in the Son her every word is pregnant of purity and virtue and perfection. Such a soul nothing can disturb: she stands firm and unshaken as in the power of God.

And Jesus reveals himself in the soul in his infinite wisdom wherein the Father knows himself in all his fatherly authority, together with his Word which is wisdom's self and all that therein is and the oneness of it. When this same wisdom is embodied in the soul, doubt, error, obstacles of all sorts fade away and leave her in the clear, pure light which is God himself. God in this soul is seen with God: she knows herself and all things with his wisdom.—Also Jesus manifests himself with passing sweetness in the power of the Holy Ghost, and with him the soul flows into herself and beyond herself and transcending all things in grace, plunges directly into her first cause.

Richardus says, commenting upon the Book of Virtue: When the divine light strikes into the soul she finds her own activities

exceedingly insipid, and unable to tolerate herself in her own powers she confines herself to enjoying God. Now St Augustine says, 'My soul is where she loves rather than where she is giving life.' At this rate God is nearer me than I am to myself; and any loving soul who follows God so far as to rise above herself, nor rests with pleasure in herself or any creature, such a soul, I say, will have no pleasure either in God's gifts: what she desires is God himself. When the soul is rid of things she has certain knowledge of and is nothing lacking in the image of God, her mind is wide open to the eternal truth. The eternal sun sheds its light into this soul and permeates her powers, each separate faculty feeling the physical contingency of the visitation according to its individual nature. And the light of the eternal sun raises all the soul-powers to the power of itself in the wholly intelligible image. When the soul undergoes this operation, as it is performed by God, in essential understanding, then the soul's understanding becomes the light (or knowledge) of all God is bringing about in her by grace. And her mind being enhanced, as we have said, her faculties are raised above the things of time, so that come what may her powers are unhindered by anything infernal and are always being augmented, never getting less. For divine understanding we depend upon God's bounty; but it is his nature to give himself to us and the soul's nature is to give herself to him who gives himself to her, thus giver and gift, doer and deed are one. The Lord Jesus said, 'I go to him that sent me.' And the soul too may say in her ascent to God, 'I go to him I came from.'

She goes to the Father, first, in her fixed intention no longer to disobey his will by cumbering herself with untoward creatures. Secondly, she goes the perfect way of answering every call God makes upon her; and thirdly, she goes in the sweet savour of God's love wherein her suffering is no suffering. Fourthly, she goes in the four cardinal virtues, prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice, over time and creatures. And she goes in the three virtues of faith, hope and charity, without which no one gets to God. Who knows to what wonders the soul may not attain by committing herself into the hands of God? Every blessed soul keeps open heart to God's consolation, and such as she receives from him she passes on to her inferior powers wherewith she knows not God else were he dishonoured in the weak intelligence of these lower faculties. And because all souls have not the same aptitude for God, the vision of God is not enjoyed the same by all any more than the sunshine affects all eyes alike.

It is written, 'There shall come forth a stem out of the root of Jesse.' Here let us consider three things: what this root is out of which God is born in the soul, and what and what measure

of profit does it bring? 'Root of Jesse' is a term for the fiery nature which attracts and transmutes all comers to itself. It is the fiery nature of God: drawing the soul it converts her into itself and she is spiritually born in understanding; for the soul has in common with the angels a light wherein she can see God, and this light she is provided with is her intellect which is ceaselessly conveying God's wisdom to the soul. But it darkens when poured into the body.

We read of three kings bringing Christ their offerings. These we take to mean the three inferior powers of the soul, things by rights at the disposal of her superior powers. I am going now to speak of these superior powers, showing how they are the kings and what gifts of lower powers it is they bring.

The first king is memory, bearing the produce of his kingdom. When the soul calls to mind how noble God has made her there flows from this perception a passionate desire which ascends to God, flinging behind it all the things of time. Then indeed King Memory comes offering the gold of love to God, together with surrender of all else.—The second king of the soul is understanding. This corresponds with her other power, reason or judgment. When the soul sees that by grace she is enabled to fulfil the will of God, she is never weary of subjugating creatures to please God and each one the more in proportion to the merit she acquires from God. Understanding then, comes rich with patience and grateful acceptance of whatever lot God destines for her in the body here and with this she has the fruit of incense, the union of all virtues, so that what would otherwise be hard and difficult her love makes feasible and easy.—The soul's third king is will. When in the flower of his strength he brings the soul the fire of love, which tries her through and through and consumes away all the sinful affections of her nature, then she is fixed, and neither life nor death nor any creature can separate her from the love of God. So they bring her myrrh to keep her from the rot of temporal things which to the soul are a fertile source of evil. St Ambrose says, 'God pours forth the soul creating and pouring forth he creates her.' And when she is in love with him, immediately he comes to her, as his spiritual bride admits where she says in the Book of Love, 'While I was at rest upon my bed my love came tapping at my window and he put in his hand and touched me.' This suggests that when the soul comes to know herself she withdraws from all the things which are present to her here, for she herself is of greater worth and higher status than any of the other things in time. When now the loving soul has gone out of all creatures and herself, then the eternal truth comes forth as well to meet the loving soul and touch her understanding and exalt it with his

light which more enriches her than all the knowledge of material things hitherto amassed by her own nature. St Augustine says, 'As the sun shines through glass and makes its contents plain, so is the soul's intelligence illumined by the light of God with the recognition of her divine abilities.' Then the soul is seen in her poverty and God in his purity. Indeed Dionysius says as much when he speaks of 'the naked soul, one with her naked God, resting in the desert of the Godhead.' It may well be called a desert, for creature never looked therein by grace. Ignorance of these matters is just cause for shame. Yet if one of the chief angels should descend and, with creatures all as wise as he, discourse of human happiness, they might talk till doomsday and not tell the tale of all God has in store for every loving soul in life eternal. But the soul must not seek God for any reason except God himself. The emptier she keeps the more God fills her and the more perfectly he does his work in her; besides, it is the safest way, for then at any moment she will be prepared to quit the body at God's instance rather than remain there at her own. And being so poor of self she will find naught but God both here and yonder. There is no call for such a soul to look outside herself: the Holy Ghost will teach her the elements of bliss in the school of her own heart. She cherishes the gift wherewith God has endowed his best beloved. And the better to fulfil God's will in everything she does she trains herself never to be without pure consciousness so that the heavenly Father can go on ever giving birth in her to his eternal Word, Jesus Christ his Son. For at her highest point my soul is not in time and does not work in time and is just as near to things a thousand miles away as to this spot I stand on.

Theoretically speaking, nothing that takes shape or is touched by time can get into the soul, and not only time but likeness. The head of the soul is her highest power, and from the moment she was made she has never for an instant been without the boon of this divine light, this power in which the time God made the world in and the judgment day are just as present to the soul as this time wherein I speak. Being in the power of her head the soul enjoys the benefit of participation in the grace and happiness common to all saints as though they were her own. It is certainly the fact that anyone actually in this head never commits sin and knows so much about eternal bliss and is so well informed that he needs no sermons. Wherefore erecting the head of the soul let us gather ourselves up into the breadth and freedom of a power like this and depart from temporal to eternal things when, in this same power, God suddenly gives birth to all he is in might and truth and wisdom in the soul. Verily the soul in whom this grace is found is absolutely pure and every whit like God. For anything

well-pleasing to the Father or which makes for our profit or our weal, must be well-pleasing to him in his Son, because apart from him he has no likes whatever. This then is the nobility which God has implanted in the soul, her beatific nature which is receptive to the grace of God, so that in this grace the light of God's pure nature can shine into the soul and the Word of the Trinity be spoken in her mind and the life of eternity energise in her.

Theologians say the soul is a suspended force in the power of the Father and a reflected light in the wisdom of the Son and a circulation in the sweetness of the Holy Ghost. According to St Augustine, the soul comes from the heavenly land, out of the paternal heart ; the offspring of God's love and scion of the noble house of the holy Trinity, she is the heir to heaven, the mistress of all creatures and the proprietor of all the joys God gives in his eternity. She is the image of God and the noblest creature that ever God conceived. For God gripped in between his divine nature and his Godhood, into his eternal essence, and produced the soul from nothing, just as he made from nothing heaven and earth and all things. If you ask how big the soul is, know, she is too big for heaven and earth to fill, or even God himself whom the heavens cannot comprehend. To measure the soul you must gauge her with God. And she is so beautiful as long as she is in the grace of God and not deformed by sin, the highest angels, Seraphim and Cherubim and all the saints try in vain to copy her in form and likeness, for she is God's image. As to her life in time, she is flowing back to her natural source whence she issued forth ; and the freer she has kept herself from temporal forms and creatures the kinder her return to God, for God is absolutely free from matter, mode and form. For the soul to compare with the abstract spirit of God she must be free from the smallest trace of sensible affection and quite without attachment to anything not God. That such perfect freedom is not known to every spirit is due solely to our undiscovered life and our untaught senses. All the potential good in creatures the soul will find in God together with inestimable joy. St Augustine says, 'When everything was still that existed in me God spake a silent Word within my soul, which no one understood but me.' And to whatever soul this Word is said she will forget all modes and forms and become an in-dweller with God. Thus St Paul relates, 'From the moment the eternal Word was revealed within my soul I no linger lived for flesh and blood.' Inasmuch as she is selfless she is self-possessed and strong. The faithful, loving soul is like the bee, sipping from all kinds of flowers the sweets to make its honey. And even so the soul culls from the flowers of virtue somewhat of each one to heal and fortify her. It is a crying need for she has three mortal

foes : the world, the flesh and the devil, hanging all together like three cherries on one stem. Of these three foes the deadliest is the body, wherein the soul is clapt as into prison : not that she may pander to its vicious appetites but to say them nay and by this resistance daily to augment her reward in heaven and here the love inpoured. It was Seneca, the heathen philosopher, who said, 'Man is his own worst enemy.' Death stands at the door of evil appetites, and the pursuit of vice leads into paths which seem all right to us but sometimes they debouch in the pit of hell. If the soul, the mistress of the body, indulges its base appetites and fails to check its sins she has herself to blame when either here or yonder she must pay for it to God. And that there may be no escaping from God's justice for them that kill the soul with sin and end in fleshly lusts, he says in the prophet Amos, 'My wrath shall drive over you like a chariot, cracking with its weight ; my anger the swift shall not outrun nor the valiant turn aside nor yet the strong man conquer with his strength. Not one shall escape me, how fair or strong or mighty soever he may be.' And seeing that the soul has such a high and heavenly destiny, therefore Meister Eckhart of Paris, at the end of the aforesaid things, which are taken from his writings, sets the following prayer :

O Sovran Riches of Divine Nature, show me thy way which thou in thy wisdom hast ordained and open to me thy most precious treasure whereto thou hast called me : to know with supercreaturely intelligence, to love with the angels, to enjoy with thy only Son our Lord Jesus Christ and to be thine heir to eternal wisdom and by thy help to be preserved from evil. For thou hast exalted me above all creatures and hast sealed me with the seal of thine eternal image and put my soul beyond the grasp of creatures and hast made nothing liker to thyself than man is in his soul. Teach me to live so that I never want thee ; so as never to hinder the working of thy love-stream in me ; so as never to lend myself to any outward pleasure without thee nor occupy my mind more with any creature than with thee. Lord thou art spirit and incomprehensible to creature ; thou dost inspire the soul and raise her to an order above creature so that she can do thy will, O Eternal Wisdom, and in grace be free from inroad of unbidden images. Thou hast made the soul to suit thyself in her nature and her laws and she maintains she has no room for anyone but thee. O Almighty and Most Merciful Creator and dear Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner and help me to overcome all pitfalls with their lures to idle pleasure ; to shun in thought and act what thou forbiddest and both to do and keep all thy commands ; help me to believe, to hope, to love ; to live and feel exactly as

thou wilt and as much as thou wilt and what thou wilt. Lord, grant me the sorrow of the humble; a mind escaped from mortal body; to love, to laud and to behold thee and cherish every act and thought that is toward thee. Grant me a clear and sober and genuinely prayerful mind with real intuition of thy will, together with the love and joy which make it easy to perform. Lord, vouchsafe me always modest progress towards better things and never to backslide. And, O my Lord, condemn me not, as I deserve, to rely on my own powers or on human weakness and unwisdom but on thy good providence alone. Direct me Lord to The Good itself, my every thought and act to thine own liking, so that on my part, in me, thy will is always being done and I being saved from evil and brought to thy eternal life where thou art three in Person and one in the essence of thy divine nature: Father, Son and Holy Ghost and ever blest almighty God. Amen.

IV

THE SOUL'S PERFECTION [1]

Speaking of the final perfection of the soul theologians ask, What is meant by saying that the spirit in its understanding has become the intellectual existence of the eternal essence in the perennial now with nothing between? That is the first question. The second question is, How can the spirit make good its intellectual return into the unchanging, and have the eternal image in perfect clearness and essential intimacy and in the interior freedom of the spirit? The third question is about the highest flight of the spirit, its nearest approach of all to the divine presence and whether its own powers are equal to the task?

First, we must remember how the divine being proceeded forth in the present now, with falling man, the gist of it, immediate in his spiritual prototype in virtue of its nearness and also by reason of the inherent now of its light of glory and intellectual image from which the intellect sees back quite clearly to the un-proceeded splendour of its eternally immanent spiritual exemplar wherein it is nameless and beyond all words which are creaturely. The word is in the eternal Word and one presence with it and God with his whole nature and the full range of his power can make out of his essence nothing more resembling the divine species in the ground divine nature and reflecting him so well. He who receives the light of the spirit as it is the image of God, wherein is no part, that is the medium of perfection, for therein his spirit is one with divine nature.

[1] See also Jostes, No. 34, of which this tractate forms the middle portion.

As to the second question, you must understand that although the intelligible image of God in the spirit partakes in its nature and purity more of the perfection of the content of its immanent essence than of the emanation of itself, nevertheless it is therein essence that has become. Take the spirit in its nearest ground, abiding within in its endless image and eternal image. As the endless image it is always within and in its eternal image it presents itself as an eternal question. As Christ asks, 'Whose is this image and this superscription?' Mark the difference between this image and its superscription. In the image exists God, and all his output in spirit and in nature—the human mind (or spirit) with all it is able to afford,—these are in uniformity so exact and close that the image of divine glory shines in all its detail in the spirit and this image in the spirit is perfectly reflected back into its indwelling essence. So much for the image of God. And what of the superscription? That is the unspeakable species of the divine nature, which in its whole ground, actual and essential, is a naked and immediate presence in the spirit, in virtue of which the spirit in its free nature and intellectual image suffers all God's super-rational operation. The limit comes where the divine freedom seizes the spirit's freedom and turns it into foolishness and at this point all scientific knowledge fails; there is no further progress to be made by natural creature-knowledge but only in spirit by experiencing God.

Now to answer the third question. Philosophers say that one's own is ever innate and can be had at will. It follows that the spirit can rise to the supreme perfection of its divine nature for it can stand in its first now, in that wherein it was not. And that is the answer to the third query.

Then there is the question, can God leave man's spirit to itself or not? I say, No, it would be against the justice of his nature and against his truth and would make a travesty of God's whole creation. God must either let the spirit be God extra to himself or else he must merge it in himself, when it has left all things. This will not outrage God, for the spirit is too haughty and touches too closely the honour of God for him to be able to make aught but himself the end of its perfection. It has this unique property: its ground can overleap all spirits into his super-intelligible spirit, namely, the indwelling essence of divine nature.

A man was asked, What dost thou lack? He said, Nothing, except poverty of spirit.—And though I have a will no bigger than a grain of mustard seed I am no poor man, and if God were to ask me, Art thou a poor man? I should reply that, be my will as good as God's yet am I not poor, not even if with that same will I do as much as God. And why? Because God and God's will

are one, I and my will are two, for I am a man and not God and if I mean to do real work entirely without or free from will then I must emulate the stone which lies in the water and the water flows over it but enters not into the stone. Even so if I were a poor man I should do my works in such a way that they entered not into my will any more than the water does into the stone: I should do them simply at the will of God. And if again God asked me, whether I was poor and if I replied, 'I have abandoned my own will and did I know the will of God that would I do,' I might be assuming something not my own, for no one knoweth who we are, though we are not the truth for God can change our knowledge, not his knowledge, because he is the truth and we are not.

Perhaps someone will say, How can I do my work like this, will-free? The answer is, I ought to do my work as though no one existed, no one lived, no one had ever come upon the earth. Then if God asked me once again, Art thou a poor man? and if I replied, 'I am unworthy of that knowing,' that were the barest poverty that ever I heard tell of or went through: the deepest, direst poverty. Yet all the while I have within enough of place for God to do his work in me, to give his gift to me, all that while I am not a poor man for all that while I am expecting God.—What more can I do?—Thus shalt thou do: thou shalt leave all willing and knowing and receiving of things and at the very point where thou hast left all things there God has given thee all things; he durst not give thee more nor any more work with thee nor canst thou take in more, but thou shalt simply leave thyself. That is poverty of spirit the most near of all, for none is downright poor but he who wills not, knows not, has not, whether within or without. To the eternal truth, God help us. Amen.

V

THE BOOK OF GODLY COMFORT

Benedictus deus et pater domini nostri Jesu Christi etc. (*2 Cor.* 1_3). That great teacher St Paul says in his epistle, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.' Three kinds of tribulation may fall upon a man and plunge him in distress. First, misfortune to exterior belongings. Next, to our dearest friends. Lastly, to ourselves: shame, hardship, pain of body and distress of mind.

So I purpose in this book to impart some teachings apt to console a man in all adversity, unhappiness and suffering. And

having therein and therefrom culled sundry general truths to comfort him in any trouble, he will find thereafter thirty rules or maxims each of which alone is sufficient for his solace ; and after that again, in the third part of the book, he will find precepts and examples, theoretical and practical, the sayings and doings of the wise in times of tribulation.[1]

1

In the first place we must bear in mind that the wise and wisdom, true and truth, good and goodness, righteousness and righteous are closely related to each other. Goodness is not made nor created nor begotten : it is procreative and begets the good and the good man, so far as he is good, is the unmade, uncreated but withal begotten child and son of goodness. Goodness reproduces itself and all it is in good things : knowledge, love, energy, it pours forth all of them into the good man, and the good man receives all his being, knowing, love and energy from the central depth of goodness and from that alone. Good and goodness are no more than goodness by itself, except as unborn parent and born child of goodness therefrom. In the good is but one being and one life. All that belongs to a good man he gets both from the good and in the good. Therein he is and lives and dwells and there he knows himself, and all he knows and loves he wills and works with goodness and in goodness and the good does all its work with him and in him, as it is written. The Son said, ' My Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. All that belongs to the Father is mine ; all that is mine is my Father's : his giving is my taking.'

Further we must remember that the Name or Word stands for nothing else, nothing more or less than the good, pure and simple. But when we call him good we understand his goodness to be given him, infused and engendered by the unborn goodness ; in the words of the gospel, ' As the Father hath life in himself so hath he given to the Son to have the same life in himself also.' *In* himself, he says, not *from* himself for the Father gave it to him.

Now all that I have said of good and goodness equally applies to true and truth, to right (or just) and righteousness (or justice), to wise and wisdom, to God's Son and to God the Father, to every God-begotten thing that has no father upon earth and wherein is gotten no created thing : nothing not God, and wherein exists not any form at all but that of God alone. St John says in his gospel, ' to them gave he power to become the sons of God, which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God alone.'

[1] Only Part 1 is given here.

By blood he means everything in man not subject to the human will. By fleshly will he means everything in man which is subject to his will, albeit with reluctance and with an inclination to fleshly appetites : a thing which is common to the body and the soul and not confined to the soul alone, which accounts for the weakness and exhaustion of their powers. By the will of man St John means the highest power of the soul, whose nature and energy, unmixed with flesh, resides in the pure nature of the soul, detached from time and place and from everything that smacks of time and place relation ; that has naught in common with naught ; wherein man is formed in the image of God ; wherein he is of the lineage of God, and God's kindred. Yet since these are not God himself but are products of the soul and are in the soul, therefore they have to lose their form and be transformed into God alone : born into God and out of God with only God for father. Then they are Son indeed, God's only Son.

I am his Son forasmuch as he begets me in his nature and forms me in his image. Such an one is the Son of God, good son of goodness, right son of righteousness. So far as he is simply good he is unborn parent and as born Son he has the same nature as righteousness has, and is and is possessed of all the character of justice and truth. In all this teaching which is found in holy gospel and confirmed in the natural light of the wise soul there is solace for every human sorrow.

St Augustine says, ' God is not far nor long. If thou wouldst find him neither far nor long betake thyself to God, for there a thousand years are as one day, to-day.' And withal I say, in God there is no pain or sorrow or distress. And if thou wouldst be free from all adversity and pain, turn thee and cleave to God and to God alone. Doubtless all thy ills are due to thy non-conversion into God and to God alone. If thou wert formed and gotten in righteousness alone, things could no more pain thee than righteousness, than God himself.

Solomon says, ' The righteous will not grieve for aught that may befall him.' He does not say the righteous man or the righteous angel, not this or that right thing ; just righteous, being right, for the righteous man is son with a father upon earth, he is creature, made or created as his father is creature made or created. He says righteous, pure and simple, and that has no made or created father, for righteousness is the same as God. So pain and sorrow can molest him no more than they do God. Justice will not grieve him, for love and joy and bliss are justice, and if justice made sorrowful the just it would be causing sorrow to itself. Injustice, inequality, can in no wise grieve the just, for anything created being far beneath him has no influence and

makes no impression on the righteous nor is it gotten into him whose only father is God.

A man then ought to set to work and de-form himself of himself and creatures and know no father except God alone. Then nothing will be able to afflict or cast him down, neither God nor creature, uncreated or created, and his entire being, life, knowledge, love and wisdom will be from God and in God and God.

There is another thing which is wont to comfort us in any tribulation. It is the certainty that the just and virtuous man delights unspeakably, incomparably more in doing right than he or even the chief angel delights and rejoices in his natural economy or life. The saints will gladly sacrifice their lives for right.

Supposing now that when outward ills befall the good and righteous man he keeps his even temper and his peace of mind, this only proves my argument that the righteous man is proof against external happenings. But suppose he is perturbed by these mishaps then it stands to reason that God is only just in sending trials to a person who while pretending to be righteous and fondly thinking himself so is yet upset by so small a thing. Since it is fair of God, he has no cause to mind but rather to rejoice, far more than he does at his own life, at what rejoices man and is of more good to him than this world all told ; for what profits a man the whole world when he is no more ?

The third important thing for us to understand is the elemental truth that the fount and living artery of universal good, essential truth and perfect consolation is God, God only, and everything not God has in itself a natural bitterness, discomfort and unhappiness and does not make for good which is of God and is the same as God, but lessens, dims and hides the sweetness, joy and comfort that God gives.

And further I maintain, all sorrow comes from love of that whereof I am deprived by loss. If I mind the loss of outward things it is a certain sign that I am fond of outward things and really love sorrow and discomfort. Is it to be wondered at that I am unhappy when I like discomfort and unhappiness ; when my heart seeks and my mind gives to creature the good that is God's own ? I turn towards creature, whence there comes by nature all discomfort, and turn my back on that which is the natural source of happiness and comfort: what wonder I am woebegone and wretched ! The fact is, it is quite impossible for God or anyone to bring true solace to a man who looks for it in creatures. But he who loves only God in creatures and creatures in God only, that man finds real and true and equal comfort everywhere.

VI

SISTER KATREI

MEISTER ECKHART'S STRASBURG DAUGHTER

Blessed and praised be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has provided for us an image of the truth, himself namely, wherein is no possibility of error!

We read in the gospel that our Lord fed the multitude with five loaves and two roast fishes. The first loaf we interpret to mean the knowledge of what we have always been in God and what we are in God now. The second loaf is the scrutiny of our life in time: seeing how our time has been spent. And for this we need help in the shape of a trusty confessor. A confessor we judge of in this way. If he has what is true we may safely confide in him. There are three signs of this. First, he is a true priest. Secondly, he is confirmed in the perfect life. And thirdly, he has the authority which stamps the true priest. Him seek wheresoever thou shalt find him. It is well worth any trouble. Go to him and solemnly kneeling before him as Mary Magdalene knelt at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, earnestly entreat him for God's sake to hear thee. Then open thy heart to him as thou shalt appear in the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ at the day of judgment when all things are revealed in truth. Discard shame in the knowledge that God has seen and heard all thy sins, and so too have those who are reflected into God from the face of the mirror of truth; they know thy shortcomings better than thou dost thyself. Be not ashamed before thy confessor, be ashamed before God and the friends of God, acquiring godly fear in the realization that God's divine glance has seen thy every will, word and act; and opening thy heart pour out thy sins till, the whole tale being told, thou dost fervently pray him: 'Sir, ghostly father, I entreat thee by the love that bound Christ on the cross, show me the nearest way to my eternal happiness.'

Upon this it is open to thy confessor to indicate three ways with which it behoves thee to be quite familiar. Setting thee thy penance, he instructs thee to repair wrongs done; he bids thee restore goods not thine own; he enjoins thee to make amends for aught thou hast done to another that thou wouldst not he should do unto thee. Word, will, and act: what was willed without effect must be willed to more purpose, thy will being such that thou wouldst sooner die a thousand deaths than plan a mischief to thine evenchristian. Thy wicked will, which is toward evil

deeds, endeavour to correct. Where thou wast haughty now walk humbly for all the world to see thou repentest thee of thy pride. Pride I single out, knowing it for a temporal fault most fatal to our eternal happiness. False pride robs spiritual no less than worldly folks of their eternal bliss. Dost know what pride is? Flattery of yourself or other people is false pride which cheats you of eternal happiness.

Next, examine yourselves for sloth in God's service. Not doing thy best is sloth in God's service. To meet this, set to and do good, showing by diligence thy sorrow for thine egregious dereliction; yet remaining detached withal and regardless of aught but God and the friends of God.

Thereafter it behoves thee to check thy third sin. Where thou wast greedy now be liberal and let thy bounty attest thy whole-hearted abhorrence of greed. Dost know what greed is? Desire of anything not God is evil greed.

The fourth sin is envy and hate: bearing malice and hatred towards any with intent to do unto him what thou wouldst not he should do unto thee. Hast injured any man by act of thine, repair the injury at any cost. Hast tarnished his fair name by word of thine, thy words must brighten it again: abasing thyself before him, entreat him humbly for God's sake to forgive thee and reiterate thy rueful supplication till he grant thee his free pardon. Call people's attention to this, withal speaking so well of the man that thou dost win him back honour no less than thou didst filch from him. Know forsooth, ere thou canst find favour with God thou must needs pay in full for wrongs done to thine evenchristians. Disparagement is mischievous. Worldly goods we can replace but stolen honour cannot be restored save by the payment of our own. So weigh thy words well, friend.

The fifth sin is anger. Reckon up words and deeds done in anger and cancel them with kindness. Peradventure thou hast spoken in anger words which, if adhered to, shall doom thee to eternal death. A word said here may reach to Rome, and from Rome to overseas: how then recall it? Thus: man pays his debts through God. Saying, Shall I not tell the truth? folks canvass the failings of their evenchristians and forget their own. I say, though thou seest and hearest the faults of thine even-christians, betray them not. If so be that thou canst not forbear the mention of them, then go and see the person privately, just you and he together; point out his faults to him in a friendly manner and invite him by thine own excellent precept and example to eschew his vicious habits. If he will not forswear them, acquaint the right authorities and leave it at that, allowing nothing of it to escape thy lips however much he vex thee. For know, to rebuke

him for sin in thine anger is to commit mortal sin : raising him out of sin thou dost fall in thyself. The sinner of to-day is the saint of to-morrow. Wherefore, unmindful of the sins and shortcomings of our evenchristians, let us look to our own imperfections, surely forgetting what God has forgotten : sins truly repented, which God has forgotten, 'tis no business of ours to remember.

The sixth sin is eating and drinking to excess : eating, perhaps, two regular meals or three while thine evenchristian goes hungry and thirsty, who is nigher to God than thou art, and liker to boot ; for he is poor while thou art rich in temporal things. Christ said, ' Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' These frailties it behoves thee to amend so thoroughly that God must needs forgive them thee.

The seventh sin in unchastity. Concerning this a heathen master says : ' All superfluity, anything unnecessary in word or deed, is unchastity.' The traverner sets his hoop to a mark when he goes to sell wine. When the wine is sold, he takes off the hoop. So let them do who are minded to cure the sin of unchastity : let them avoid excess in word and deed and walk right humbly and soberly before the world, so all shall say that anything to be called excess offends them.

Thy next care, daughter, is whether thou hast kept the ten commandments all thy days. To take one that Christ mentions, ' Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength,' thou canst be shown to have broken this frequently. And breaking this commandment thou dost break them all. It behoves thee to tell thy confessor how often thou hast broken it from childhood up. It would take too long to go through all the ten commandments and say what thou must tell to thy confessor. Thou wilt see that for thyself better than we can tell thee.

Then, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost : how often thou hast resisted them and hast failed to practise the seven works of mercy, wherefor God shall arrantly upbraid thee at the day of judgment. Make a fresh start, my daughter, so mending thy ways that God is obliged to forget thy shortcomings.

Such is the first counsel of the worthy confessor and the first way. To the question : ' Sir, is it the best way ? ' he will answer, ' No, but what I am telling thee is indispensable.' Says she, ' Then, sir, tell me the best way.' He answers, ' Bide till thou hast made thine own this counsel I have given thee ; bide till thou hast cast thy sins ; and meanwhile come often to see me.'

Obedient to her revered confessor, the daughter does this. She often comes back to him and says, ' Sir, I will obey you to

the death if you will help me so to live that I am bold to die.'—'Hast cast thy sins?' he asked. 'Aye,' she replied, 'so far as I shall ever do it here in time; and will do till I die.'—'Then I will redirect thee, and give thee fresh instructions. Keep a truthful tongue, a pure body and a loving soul. A code that may be construed thus: A truthful tongue means that the lips utter only the intentions of the heart. Thus thou shalt speak the truth, daughter. God is truth, so thy whole conversation shall be of God; not praying nor thinking of God thou thus speakest of God, and art ever receiving from God.

'A pure body means that, pierced with godly fear, thou sufferest naught save God to dwell in thee.

'A loving soul is one that loves her likes, God namely. Unite thyself with him until thee thinks thy heart is fit to burst with too much love.' Whereat the daughter cried, 'And I an utter stranger to it! Sir,' she said, 'shall I ever come acquainted with it?' He said, 'Yes. Do as I bid you: discard the things that are darkening thy soul, and let the light of truth in. Then thy soul can retrace the road she came.'

By the third loaf we understand God's mercy. Consider, daughter, the plenteous compassion that God has shown thee. When, having endowed thee with free will, thou didst of thy free will incur eternal death, he ransomed thee with his own self and washing thee in his own blood did cleanse thee from original sin. Observe further God's mercy in being ready to forgive thy sins as often as thou seekest grace in time. To enumerate God's mercies time would fail us though we lived till doomsday. Folks talk of God's providence. Know, what God has provided for us is his eternal felicity, in token whereof he has given us free will to do good and eschew evil.

At this point it behoves us to determine whether we truly repent us of our sins. Wouldst know the quality of true repentance? It has to be so strong in thee that thou wouldst sooner die a thousand deaths than sin one sin. There be many that say 'I truly repent me of my sins' who yet remain in sin. Speaking falsely they augment their sin. Thou virtuous soul who wouldst enjoy God's mercy and be baptized in the Holy Ghost, repent thee thrice: (first) for the sins thou hast committed against the Lord thy God by word and deed. Repent thee next of sins against thine evenchristians. If thou wouldst taste God's clemency and have him to forgive thy sins and dowse thee with his Holy Ghost in grace, then show the mercy due to all mankind made in Christ's image as they are, whether or not they shall have sinned against thee: needs must if thou art ever to find grace. The third repentance is heartfelt pity for thyself, bred from a survey of the

happy days that God has granted thee for finding thy eternal happiness, he having made all creatures for signposts to thy highest good. As St Augustine says: 'All creatures point me to my good; Lord, I deeply rue that if I ever get to thee 'tis by thy mercy. The time goes by that thou hast given me and thou art still unknown to me and unbeloved: hence my regret. And yet I fear me, Lord, I never felt the true rue that I ought.'

By the fourth loaf we understand God's justice. Innately, he is as just as he is merciful. Yet know, were I to tell you of God's justice, 'twould be too hard for you: precious few would look for grace. Hence we emphasise God's mercy, who throws souls into purgatory to find grace at the judgment day if not before. Know that in itself God's justice is of a sternness that must make all tremble. Well knowing this, Christ said to his disciples: 'Having done all that is possible to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.' We learn this from St John also, who, though he did no sin to separate him from God yet likened himself to the beasts of the forest. Surely he knew God's truth. I say, moreover, God's justice is so harsh that, though a man should do all the good works wrought by the company of saints now in eternal life, yet, being found in any mortal sin (the first is pride; the second, slothfulness in God's service; the third, hate; the fourth, anger; the fifth, greed; the sixth, overeating and drinking; the seventh, unchastity: these are the seven deadly sins), being found, I say, in one of these, he would be lost eternally. I hold it would avail him nothing for all the saints in heaven to intercede for him. I affirm, moreover, were Christ to supplicate his Father, and Mary his mother, 'twould not avail to save his soul. Further, concerning this I say that I would sooner have the man who sins a thousand mortal sins and knows it, than him who sins but one in ignorance: that man is lost. I hold he may have practised every virtue of Holy Christendom and it will not avail him, he is damned with the lost, while he of a thousand conscious sins is saved, provided that, renouncing them heartily in true repentance, never to do them more, he mends his ways, steadfast in love till death. That man ranks with the saints. Ah, daughter, mark those souls who, all their days exempt from mortal sins, can say with the young man, 'I have kept thy commandments all my life.' Would to God I knew one person who could even say, 'All my days have I kept the first of Christ's commandments, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy soul-powers,' and who has been preserved the while from spiritual pride.

The fifth loaf signifies true faith. It means absolute trust in God. He who believes in God trusts God and knows God and therefore loves God. Observe, woman, having true faith means believing in God's omnipotence. The masters say: 'Whosoever

has true faith as much as a grain of mustard seed, can remove mountains.' Wherefore it behoves us assiduously to free ourselves from things corruptible, which dim the light wherein we see the true faith, which is God. To be able to say, 'I am a true Christian,' a man must subsist in Christ in the sense that Christ is his exemplar whereto he is conformed in word and deed. Know, that whatever Christ did he did to edify us in eternal truth, for he is the truth itself; he can initiate thee into the true faith. What I say is, that to get to the Father we must go to him in Christ; to know the Father we must know him in Christ. And so Christ taught. When Philip asked him, 'Show us the Father,' Christ answered, 'He who seeth me seeth the Father, and where the Father is there I am.' Plainly then, we must follow the lead of the Beloved if we would be saved. People say, 'How can I do as Christ did?' Christ tells us how. He said, 'Take up your cross and follow me.' Which do not understand to mean he bids you die the death he died upon the cross. His words were, 'Follow me,' meaning we are to imitate his perfect life. Our temporal failure to imitate his life in word and deed is our eternal failure. Concerning this he said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' For you must know that many a man who goes to heaven no more enjoys the light of God's countenance than sunshine in forest gloom. Nay, friend, mark what Christ said to the kinswoman who besought him for her son. He said, 'He who drinks of the cup I wot of shall be joint heir with me in my Father's kingdom.' Which being interpreted means: by our measure here it shall be meted to us again by our heavenly Father in his eternal kingdom. As St Augustine says: 'So far as we know and love here we profit eternally.'

Theologians speak of hell. I will tell you what hell is. It is merely a state. Your state here is your eternal state. This is hell. Take an illustration. A thief who has incurred the penalty of death on being caught: picture his state of mind seeing others happy! So do we feel, and worse. And so with those in hell who see God and his friends: the height of torment, so the masters say.

This learnt, the aforementioned daughter goes to her revered confessor. She says, 'Sir, tell me the best way to my eternal happiness.' Quoth he, 'Daughter, let be.'—'I shall never let be,' she said, 'so long as my eternal happiness is not assured.' He said, 'Thou art sure of eternal life, daughter.'—'But, sir,' she persisted, 'have you told me the nearest way to it?'—'Any creature will tell you that,' he said. 'With one accord they all exclaim: Pass on, we are not God. 'Tis direction enough, daughter.'—'Not for me, sir,' she said. Said he, 'An thou wilt

not believe me, at least thou wilt credit the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: Take up thy cross and follow me. He did not say, Take up *my* cross and follow me. What he meant was: be content to do thy best, knowing that therewith God too is satisfied.'—'Would I had done my best,' she cried.—'What wouldst thou do?' he asked. She answered, 'I would leave honour and possessions and friends and kindred and the outward solace I get from creatures.'—'Wouldst leave me too?' asked her confessor. She answered, 'Aye, sir; leaving all things, I must leave you also.'—'Essay it not,' he said, ''tis not for a woman.' Quoth she, 'Full well I wot no woman can enter heaven till she be man. That means she must do man's work and have the strength of mind to withstand him and all imperfections.'—'Thou deemst thyself mighty strong! I wonder now, how thou wouldst like to bear more than thou hast already.' She said, 'I can bear all, sir, that Christ has borne for me.' He said, 'These are words!' She said, 'It is true.'—'Canst prove it?' said he. 'With ease,' said she. 'I have heard tell that in none of Christ's sufferings did his Godhead come to the help of his manhood.' He said, 'That is true. The Godhead is impassible; it never has suffered and never can suffer, seeing that nothing affects it.' Quoth she, 'What Christ bore, I can bear.' He said, 'Tell me how.'—'I will,' she replied. 'Right well I ween Christ was the noblest man that ever was born: from threescore kings and twelve he was descended; and I say, moreover, he was the best heart's-blood of Mary. See now my proof that I am fit to bear all he bore for me. Taking the test of breeding, the best bred are the tenderest. It follows that I can bear more than Christ can.' Said he, 'Were I to tell you all I know of the perfection of his life in time in right willing poverty, 'twere like to break my heart. Bethink thee well!' She said, 'I have bethought me. This very day I mean to follow the dictates of the Holy Ghost.'—'What does the Holy Ghost dictate?' he asked. She answered, 'He counsels me to leave myself in the mighty hands of God and to sever my ties with creatures.'—'Thou art wrong,' he said. 'How so?' said she. He said, 'In not taking advice. Obedience is a virtue, as thou knowest.'—'I am obedient unto death,' she said. 'To whom?' he queried. 'To Christ and his heavenly Father to whom John was obedient in the wilderness, and Mary Magdalene and Mary of Egypt and Mary Salome.' Quoth he, 'It seems thou wilt no longer mind me.'—'You are right,' she cried; 'I am heartily sorry I listened so long to the counsels of men and was deaf to the counsel of the Holy Ghost.'—'Now listen to me, my daughter. What thinkst thou I have done to thee?'—'You have kept me from eternal bliss,' she said. 'How so?' he asked. She answered,

'By not telling me outright the quickest way to it.'—'It is obedience to the Holy Ghost,' he said. 'I should never counsel thee otherwise than I have counselled thee.'—'If you had not discouraged me,' she said, 'and other spiritual folks to boot, I should have spent my time more virtuously. I weened, forsooth, it were the gospel that priests propagated.'—'The gospel is begotten in the Holy Ghost of the perfect life of our Lord Jesus Christ and according to his noble teachings. We read and preach the gospel openly: he who would follow it let him follow it to the utmost.'—'God forgive me for not doing so all my days,' said she. Quoth he, 'I grieve thou shouldst accuse me of preventing thee.'—'Aye,' she replied, 'I accuse you and all creatures.'—'Thou art mistook,' he said. 'No one can hinder thee but thine own self. Know, whom God impels none can resist: not all the saints in heaven nor all the preaching friars and barefoot monks on earth can stand against one man moved by the truth. He is impelled by that same word which Christ spoke, answering the youth who sought the perfect life. Christ said: Keep the ten commandments. The young man replied, All these have I kept from my youth up. Then said Christ, If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor and follow me. Christ made known this same truth to us by Peter and others of his disciples whom he called to live with him in willing poverty. Thou knowest, daughter, that what Christ said and did is true, for he is truth itself; and know moreover, that to reach the Father we must walk in Christ's footsteps all the way.' Quoth she, 'Well then, good father, why be so discouraging?'—''Tis such a flawless life,' he said, 'anyone leading it God must needs come and help.'—'God does not come and go,' she said; 'that I do know. I wot right well when we resign ourselves to him he does not fail to succour us at need.' Quoth he, 'What if all creatures despise thee?' She said, 'I want to be the least of creatures in our Lord Jesus Christ, the lowest of his creatures; then I can say with Paul, Rejoice, all creatures are my cross and I the cross of creatures.' He said, 'Daughter, thou art too young.'—'Mary was younger than I,' she said, 'when she set forth into the desert and exile, driven by robbery and murder.'—'God was with her,' said he. 'And well I wot God is with me.' said she. 'He was there present in her.' he replied. 'He is ever present in my soul,' she said. Quoth he, 'But Mary had a solemn pledge of his presence, which thou hast not, my daughter.' Quoth she, 'Since I dispense with outward consolations, I am without his outward presence. I would that he were ever being born within my soul.'—'Think twice,' he said, 'before adventuring that.'—'Peace, let me speak!' she cried, ''tis by your too much admonition that you have hindered me.' He said, 'Know, did

the truth move thee, thou hadst not done nor yet forborne because of me. I am but creature, as thou knowest. As long as any creature has power to give and take thou livest not unto truth. Truth has virtue sufficient to raise man to the summit without help from creatures. Thou durst not cast the blame on me, for know, whom the truth moves has the Holy Ghost to his master, who educates his pupils in the highest school of all. There we learn more in the twinkling of an eye than all the doctors can express.'—' You speak the truth,' she said.

The second article of faith is trust in God. He can say he trusts God who keeps not overnight so much as a pen'orth of possessions. I say more: he keeps nothing at all; but he who withholds but a pennyworth of worldly goods from his even-christian, knowing him to be in need of it, is a robber in the sight of God. I warn you, by Christ who suffered so for love of men, allow no want in any man, he being made in the likeness of Christ for whose sake God created all things; and impair not his condition by withholding from him his father's goods, which it behoves him to restore to God.

Further I declare, who spares a penny for himself to put it by against a rainy day, thinking, I may need that for to-morrow, is a murderer before God. And I will prove it. For if he trust God he will leave himself in God's hands; if God give him the morrow, he will give him also the wherewithal for it. Hence I affirm there be few who have faith enough to trust God blindly. Know that the man who sets more store by worldly goods than by his powers of knowing and loving God, is justly termed a murderer. This I call Christ to witness, who said, ' When I am ascended I will draw all things after me.' In the same way the virtuous man takes all things up to God, to their first source. The masters teach that creatures were made for man. They prove it from the fact that creatures all need each other: cattle need grass, fish water, birds the air, and beasts the forest. By the same token all creatures come in useful to the good and are carried, one creature in the other, by the good soul to God. Lived there a man who trusted God, God would do unto him better than ever he could do unto himself.

Take the third article of faith, that is, knowledge of God. I say, no man knows God who knows not himself first. Mark how to know yourselves. To know himself a man must be for ever on the watch over himself, holding his outer faculties, breaking them in by vigorous training to obey the higher powers of his soul. This discipline must be continued till he reach a state of consciousness so pure that nothing short of God can form in it. Then thou dost come acquainted with thyself and God.

The fourth property of faith is love. To be able to say, ' I love thee, Lord,' a man must suffer without why what without why Christ suffered, and suffer it gladly without suffering. Though God shall tell him mouth to mouth, ' Thou shalt be lost for ever with the damned,' he only loves God all the more, and says, ' Lord, an thou wilt that I be damned, damned I will be, eternally.' Thus he identifies his will with what God wills, willing that same in earth and heaven. Of this he deems himself unworthy. That man can say, ' I love thee.'

We have explained now what faith means. To carry out in practice these articles of faith as enumerated from the start entitles us to say, ' I believe in God.'

By the two roast fishes (one fish is will, the other its fulfilment) we understand thorough subjection, the downright death of thy whole nature—the marrow of thy bones, blood in thy veins and whole concomitants of natural vigour—so that albeit having the will to sin, thou hast no power to. Doctors debate whether a man can reach the stage at which he is incapable of sinning in his body. The best authorities say ' Yes ' ; alluding to souls so perfectly disciplined outwardly and inwardly that they have no propensity to sin.

The second fish we take to signify achievement of the virtues ; virtue consummated to the pitch where it becomes instinctive ; where virtue is our very being ; where our knowledge and love transcend virtue. A man at this stage gives pure light.

Doctors describe four kinds of light. The first is natural, the light of natural man apt in affairs, which is less a help than a hindrance. The second is the light of grace. Whom this enlightens has his natural light put out. It lights him on the road to his salvation, preserving him in grace so he follow it closely. The third light lightens the angels and man in his primitive innocence. For know, the man who with the angels receives all things from God is void of mundane things and creaturehood and naked as he was when he came out of God. Man can what angels cannot : in this light he can transcend the angels and receive all things from the source of divine truth. Then he is given divine light, the fourth light, and about this I am dumb. I keep that to myself.

Here the daughter comes to her revered confessor and says, ' Sir, I fear I shall never do it.'—' Why not ? ' said he. Said she, ' I still have all the virtues to cultivate. I ween I never brought one single virtue to the pitch required.' Quoth he, ' Be satisfied to do thy best.'—' I have never done my best,' she said, ' albeit I am well aware that I am thrice behoven unto God. My first behoof is to repair my faults.'—' None can repair a fault if God

forgive it not in love,' said he. 'I wot of that,' she said, 'but I must do my share and live in hopes of grace until I die.'

Quoth he, 'What is thy second accusation?' She answered, 'That, while fain to be in the joy of our Lord, I have not lived accordingly, albeit well aware that to enter there one has to live the perfect life in our Lord Jesus Christ.'—'That is so,' he said. 'Tell me, what is thy third behoof?' She said, 'Though there were neither hell nor heaven, to follow him for true love all the same, as he prevented me: to follow him to the end without a why. I know my duty but mend not my ways as in duty bound.'—'What more wouldst thou do?' he asked. 'Thou hast given up honour and possessions, and kith and kin and every comfort thou didst get from creatures.'—'True, sir, in letter,' she said, 'but giving up all God ever created to leave it for God's sake is giving up nothing; it is not mine to give. It is God's. Anything in the shape of possessions is God's. Wherefore I ween there is still something more for me to leave.'—'What must thou leave?' he asked.—'Myself,' she answered. 'If I leave myself wherever I find myself I can say, I have left myself.'—'Thou art right,' he cried, 'but I marvel, being so sensitive, thou canst brook the insults heaped upon thee.' She said, 'God knows I feel none.' Quoth he, 'Does it not touch thee that thy friends, spiritual as well as worldly, are so distressed on thy account, thinking thee most mistook in thy behaviour?'—'What is that to me?' she said. 'For well I ween Christ knew, when he was sitting in the temple, that Joseph and his mother sought him sorrowing. The doctors told Christ: Thy father and thy mother are seeking thee. Christ answered: He who is kind to me, the same is my father and mother and sister and brother.'—'True,' he said. 'I prithee, though, accept life's necessaries when they are offered thee in the name of God.'—'Tell me,' she queried, 'what are necessaries?'—'Wouldst have me specify the bare necessities of life?' he asked. 'Aye,' she replied. 'Bread, water, and a cloak,' he said. 'These are bare bodily necessities.' Quoth she, 'Now tell me what is necessary?' And he made answer, 'To dwell in utter ignominy in Christ who alone lives.'—'Now God reward you!' she exclaimed. 'Pray God on my behalf to give all creatures licence to cry me down and persecute me to their topmost bent.' Quoth he, 'Thou'lt get a plenty in thy vocation. A holy man has said, Did God know anyone willing to suffer the sum of human suffering, he would give it him to bear that his worth might be so much the greater in eternity. God will do this out of pure love to anyone he calls to him.' Quoth she, 'A master says, He alone deserves suffering who dearly desires it.'—'True, daughter,' he said. 'Prithee, an thou wilt, remain in these parts and busy thyself among us.'—

'That will I not,' she answered, 'I must be about my own business. I mean to live in exile, anywhere where I am persecuted. For you must know I have found more of God in the least despisery than ever I did in the sweetness of creatures.'—'I'll not quarrel with that for it is true,' he said. 'Christ proves it by those words to his disciples, Go ye into all places where they shall persecute you.' Quoth she, 'God bless you for it, who have my homage betwixt me and God.'—'Come to me wheresoever thou shalt find me,' he said.—'That will I gladly.'

St Paul affirms of the holy martyrs and friends of our Lord, 'They are dead.' From this we argue that we have to be dead too. I hold that anyone who is not really dead has not the faintest notion of the sacred things revealed by God to his beloved. As long as thou still knowest who thy father and thy mother have been in time, thou art not dead with the real death. Further I hold: as long as it affects thee that no one will shrive thee nor give thee God's body nor shelter thee from the world's scorn, as long as it is in thee to be moved by this, know that thou art a stranger to the true death. When thou art aware of nothing within thee: when, having escaped from earthly species and forgot thy honourable estate and all temporal happenings, thou hast entered oblivion so deep that nothing formulates itself in thee and thou art sensible of naught save the sheer ascension of thy soul, then thou canst say that thou art really dead. He who is dead thus is always the same; nothing affects him. Anent this St John says, 'Blessed are the dead that die in God.' See then, my friends, how good it is to die in God. We can die gladly if God will live and work in us while we are idle. We die, 'tis true, but 'tis a gentle death. Folks tell us of the holy life, how they have suffered. To tell the tale of what our Lord's friends suffered time would be all too short. I say: they did not suffer. The least suspicion of God-consciousness and sufferings would be all forgot. This may well happen while the soul is in the body. I say more: while yet in the body a soul may reach oblivion of its travail not to remember it again. Further I hold: to him who suffers not for love, to suffer is suffering and is hard to bear. But he who suffers for love does not suffer, and this suffering is fruitful in God's sight. It follows, friends, that by contriving to die in God gladly, we go scot-free from suffering. To practise this is to be really dead. So to die in God, help us O Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Here the aforementioned daughter comes to her confessor, beseeching him, 'Sir, hear me for God's sake.'—'Whence come you?' said he. 'From foreign parts,' said she. He asked, 'Of what country art thou?' She answered, 'Sir, do you not know me?'—'Not I, God wot,' quoth he. Quoth she, 'By the same

token you have never known yourself.'—' True,' he replied, ' for well I ween that if I knew myself as intimately as I ought, I should have perfect knowledge of all creatures.'—' You are right,' she said ; ' but a truce to this talk, sir. Hear me, in God's name.'—' Willingly,' he said. ' Say on.'

The daughter made confession to her revered confessor, as it was now in her to do, in a manner to rejoice his heart. Quoth he, ' Return ere long, daughter.'—' Gladly, God willing,' quoth she.

Going off to his brethren he announces, ' I have just shriven someone, whether woman or angel I misdoubt, nay, I wot not. If woman, her soul powers dwell with the angels in heaven and her soul has received angelic nature. She knows and loves beyond anyone I ever met.'—' Glory be to God,' the brethren cry.

Seeking his daughter where he knows her to be, in the chapel, namely, her confessor earnestly entreats her to converse with him. —' Do you not know me yet ? ' she asks. He answers, ' No, God knows.'—' Then I will tell you for love. I am the poor soul you led to God.' And she discovers to him her identity.—' Alas, wretch that I am ! ' he cries. ' Shame on me in the sight of God that having spiritual light so long I am so unfamiliar with divinity. Prithee, my daughter, for the love of God, recount to me thy life and doings since I last saw thee.' Quoth she, ' That were a deal to tell.'—' Not more than I am fain to hear,' he said. ' Know, I have been amazed by what you told me.'

Ere taking up her tale the daughter says to her confessor : ' You must never betray me while I live.'—' I give you my word,' he answered, ' not to divulge thy confession during thy lifetime.' Whereupon she embarks on such a wondrous story he marvels any human being could go through so much. Quoth she, ' Sir, still I fall short. I find that I have conquered all my heart's desires save only that my faith be not assailed.'—' God be praised for making thee,' he cried. ' Now rest content.'—' Never,' she said, ' while my soul has no abiding place in eternity.' Said he, ' I should be well content to have my soul ascend as thine does.' She said, ' My soul ascends freely, but it makes no stay. To will does not content me ; if only I might know the thing to do to establish me permanently in eternity ! ' He asked, ' Is the desire so strong ? ' She answered, ' Aye.'—' Be rid of it,' he said, ' if thou wouldst be confirmed.' Saying, ' 'Tis gladly done,' she sinks into destitution. And God drawing her in his divine light she weens that she is one with God. While this continues she keeps beating back into herself with an overwhelming sense of deity, and keeps ejaculating, ' I am sure there is no escape for me.'

The confessor visits his daughter frequently, inquiring, ' Tell

me, how goes it now with thee ? '—' Ill,' she replies. ' Heaven and earth are too confined for me.' He entreats her to tell him something. She says, ' I have nothing whatever to tell.'—' Just a word, for God's sake,' he pleads, and wins it for the asking. She proceeds to reveal to him such profound and marvellous things concerning the pure perception of divine truth that he exclaims, ' Thou knowest this is not common knowledge, and were I not among those priests who have read it in theology, I had not known it either.'—' Much good it is to you,' she said. ' I would you had a lively sense of it.' Said he, ' I am this much alive to it, I feel as certain of it as of my having said the mass to-day. Natheless, this lack of actual experience does trouble me.'

With the words, ' Pray God for me,' the daughter returns into her solitude to enjoy God's society. Ere long she appears at the door again, demanding her confessor, to whom she says, ' Sir, rejoice with me, I am God.'—' Glory be to God ! ' he cries. ' Retire again into thy solitude ; all joy be thine an thou remainest God.'

Obedient to her confessor, she goes into the chapel, into a secluded corner. There oblivion descended upon her, and she forgot everything named and was so far withdrawn from self and everything created that she had to be carried from the church and lay till the third day, surely accounted for dead. ' I misdoubt she is dead,' quoth her confessor. Know, had there been no confessor they would have buried her. They essayed by all manner of means, but whether her soul was in her body they could not discover. They said, ' For sure she is dead.'—' For sure she is not,' said her confessor. On the third day the daughter returned. ' Alas, me miserable, am I back ! ' she cried. Her confessor, who was already there, addressed her, saying, ' Permit me to taste divine truth in the revelation of thy experience.' She said, ' God knows, I cannot. My experience is ineffable.'—' Hast got now all thou wilt ? ' he asked. She answered, ' Aye. I am confirmed.'

Blest and praised be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who showed us the way to conquer by grace what he is by nature. It needs a God-receptive man who treads beneath his feet self and all creatures. He has five deaths to die. The first is death to natural things. Being dead to nature spirit reigns. Nevertheless he still may lapse into eternal death, as shown by Lucifer. Himself pure spirit, from himself he fell, falling eternally. We must die in spirit, our spirit being inspired into the spirit of truth. Now we begin to live in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, strictly obeying his precepts and example. Thus we die in our Lord Jesus Christ in the truth which is himself, even as he died in his humanity. And we rise in our Lord Jesus Christ to live again in

the quick of life. We enter the Father in the Son. Humanity receives its *coup de grâce*, pierced to the heart by light divine. Therein man learns to know himself. Forgot are all God's gifts beknownst to him. Thought, word, will, act, lie strewn before him in the reflection of the divine light received from the Father. In this divine light the soul sees herself less than creature. She finds no place to dwell in. She deems herself the vilest thing God ever made. Lucifer is to her so meritorious that she ranks under him. Accordingly the masters say, 'Christ's soul and Lucifer's were made in the same light.' Hence the soul's grievance and self-condemnation. Christ's soul was the wisest soul that ever was: she faced round in the creature and looked towards the creator. Wherefore the Father clad her in the divine garment and property of his own nature. But Lucifer looked away to the deficiency and thereby fell, falling eternally. So fall all they that turn from God to things corruptible. In this plight the soul now finds herself and is consumed within herself, there thinking to remain eternally, for it is she who is to blame.

The best authorities aver that from the very lowest angel of all those in heaven, there fell one drop upon the highest heaven. This started the celestial revolutions, each heaven following the course nature laid down for carrying round the drop. From it all creatures get their life, those that have life in time; in it all creatures hie them back to their first source; in it the soul becomes aware that, so little has God become in time, our works must be wrought above time, in eternity. Christ taught us this. His works are all wrought in eternity. Did God perform one act outside himself, he were not God. God's works are wrought so that they remain in him. And our works which are wrought thus endure in eternity. Understand, we call *mine* that which is in me, which none can take from me.—Here the soul is moved to exclaim: 'Alas, that I have wrought so many works outside me!'

Concerning nature, the masters speak as follows: Nature and naturalness are not identical. The natural state is taken on in time; nature is in itself eternal. This touches the soul. Philosophers will tell you that thunder is merely the result of opposites. Clouds cannot bear being charged with opposites, which crash together; hence lightning and the thunder. So with the wind; it blows till foreign matter is expelled, namely, the rain. Creatures in general will purify themselves from incompatibles.

Here the soul realizes that she has often harboured incompatibles. She says: 'Creatures all pointed me to my eternal happiness. They did not Lucifer: he fell from God for ever because of the unlikes he assumed. God kept me in himself. I had no mind to

see it, so I can never look for grace.' And there she stops, failing to rise beyond herself.

Now theologians say, God is by nature bound to draw his likes out of their selfhood into himself just as the sun will draw up moisture. Then the soul, merged in the naked Godhead, is no more to be found than a wine-drop in mid-ocean. That soul can no more sin than God can. The man is said to be conformed to God. God is his active principle. He has real perception. Things are in him without image, for he is one with God in whom are all things. In this case it is true to say, all things are in man formless. The masters say: 'To gauge the soul we must gauge her with God, for the ground of God and the ground of the soul are one nature.' The part that gives life to the body is the least part of the soul. The man who realizes this has fresh and inexhaustible delight. What though he walks in time, he dwells in his eternal nature. He inhabits the truth. This man is known by five signs. First, he never complains. Next, he never makes excuses: when accused, he leaves the facts to vindicate him. Thirdly, there is nothing he wants in earth or heaven but what God wills himself. Fourthly, he is not moved in time. Fifthly, he is never rejoiced: he is joy itself.

Here the trusty confessor comes seeking his daughter in an unknown land, earnestly entreating her to hold converse with him. She says, 'I can talk with you of outward things.'—'Twill serve,' quoth he. 'Tell me, what, thinkest thou, made thee most ripe for the eternal truth?' She answered: 'Leaving myself wherever I found myself. Next, never excusing myself from accusations which concerned myself alone. Thirdly, whatever my pain, wanting still more and compelling myself to bear it equably. Fourth, being supple to insignificance, poverty and lack of creature comforts. Fifth, never seeing souls sin without rebuke and never hearing things against the gospel and the life of Christ without I fought them to the death. But know that it has been my habit rather to rebuke those persons whose sins I saw were doing them a mortal mischief. I never did it save purely out of love to God, being moved to pity for them. Many an insult they have hurled upon me. Sixth, never avoiding occasion of insult: I fled from honour but I stayed for shame. Seventh, never looking back when once I knew the way to my eternal happiness; and taking no man's counsel, but plodding straight on. Eighth, being never content with present light nor present sight, which were as nothing to my certainty. Ninth, never resisting any use God chose to put me to. Tenth, rigid discipline, inward and outward.'

'God be praised,' he said. 'Thou hast told me thy outward rule; now tell me thy inner.' Quoth she, 'God wot, I fear it is

beyond you.'—' But just a hint; deny me not,' he urged. And she responded: ' At the moment of confirmation there existed in me all the works God ever wrought as a little thing inferior to heaven. My abode was heaven. I dwelt there with the inmates of the Trinity which to me was as familiar as to the householder the house he dwells in, and saw the partition between all creatures and God's whole creation: it was as plain as the five fingers on my hand.'—' He said, ' Explain more fully.' She replied, ' I will. I had assembled all my soul-powers. When I saw into myself I saw God in me and everything God ever made in earth and heaven. Let me explain it better. As you know right well, anyone who faces God in the mirror of truth sees everything depicted in that mirror: all things, that is to say. Such was my inner habit before confirmation. Do you quite take me ? '—' It must be so, of course,' he said. ' Is that not thy rule now ? ' She answered, ' No, I have nothing to do with saints nor angels nor creatures nor anything created; it is all uniform: not merely nothing created but nothing uttered concerns me.'—' Explain,' he said. She said, ' I will. I am confirmed in the naked Godhead, wherein is neither form or image.'—' Art there for good ? ' he asked. She answered, ' Yes.' Quoth he, ' Daughter, say on, this talk delights me.' And she proceeded, ' As I am no creature can be, as creature.'—' Explain,' he said. Quoth she, ' I am as I was before I was created: just God and God. No saint nor angel nor choir nor heaven. Eight heavens are often spoken of and nine choirs of angels; there is nothing of that where I am. You must know that expressions of that sort, which conjure up pictures in the mind, merely serve as allurements to God. In God there is nothing but God; no soul gets to God until she is God as she was before she was made.'

He said, ' You speak the truth, daughter. Now do for God's sake counsel me as best thou canst how I may gain possession of this good.'—' I will give you sure guidance,' she said. ' As you are well aware, creatures were made from nothing and must return to nothing ere they reach their source.' ' True,' he agreed. Quoth she, ' Enough said. Tell me now, what is nothing ? ' He replied, ' I know what is nothing and I know what is less than nothing. Imperfections, I take it, are nothing to God. So that anyone subject to imperfections is less than nothing.'—' How so ? ' —' He is the servant of imperfection. Nothing is nothing. The servant of imperfection is less than nothing.' Quoth she, ' Precisely. The way then to obtain your good is to subordinate yourself to yourself and creatures till you can find no more to do towards God's working in you.'—' You are right,' he cried. ' One master says, He who loves God as his God, and prays to God as

his God and is therewith content, is to me as an unbeliever.'—'Blessed be the master who said that,' quoth she. 'He knew the truth. For you must understand that anyone content with what can be expressed in words—God is a word, heaven is a word—whose soul-powers, love and knowledge, insist on nothing further than what can be expressed, is aptly styled an unbeliever. It is the lower senses or powers of the soul which grasp things uttered. The higher powers are not content with that: these keep on pressing forward till they strike the source from whence the soul flowed forth. The powers of the soul cannot enter her source. All nine powers of the soul serve the man of the soul; they draw him out of nether things and speed him to his source. When the soul stands before her cause, superior to things in her main power, her powers remain without. Look you, it is the naked soul, naked of things nameable, one in the same, that progresses in the naked Godhead, like oil that creeps in cloth: so the soul goes creeping forward, flowing on and on so long as God ordains her to give life to the body in time. Know, while the good man lives on earth his soul is progressing in eternity. Hence the good like living.'—'True daughter,' he observed. 'One master says: Suppose there lay at point to die two men equally pleasant in the eyes of God, and that both died, the one before the other but just long enough to give that other time to breathe one sigh for God, to cast one thought to the least martyr that God ever led, the lightest word God ever spoke, this would entitle him to precedence over the other who died first, while God remains eternal.'—'That is so,' she said. 'Know also, as the good shall rise so fall the wicked who are in sin.'

'Now prithee, daughter, tell me. We speak of heaven and hell and purgatory and read a vast amount about them. We also read that God is in everything and everything in God.'—'And so it is,' she said.—'Then, for God's sake,' quoth he, 'acquaint me with the rightful view of it.'—'Gladly, so far as I can put it into words,' she said. 'Hell is nothing but a state or being. Our being here is our eternal being; we are as it were grounded in it. Many people fondly imagine here to have creaturely being and divine being yonder. That is not so. It is a popular delusion. Purgatory is a thing assumed, like penance, and comes to an end. Look at it like this. Some souls so reverence God and the friends of God that God is constrained to have mercy on them, be it only at their end that true repentance comes to them in love and knowledge and they rise out of themselves and everything created. Then true love is their being and did they go on living they would sin no more but suffer for true love's sake all our Lord Jesus Christ suffered, and his beloved. These rise in grace. But people who

go hence in their state of creaturehood are in that state eternally which is called hell. Likewise, there remains their state to those who suffer naught but God to be in them : God is their being and remains their being eternally.

'Again, touching the last day, people say, God shall judge. So he shall, but not as they think. Each man is his own judge in this sense : the state he then appears in he is in eternally. People frequently assert : The body shall rise with the soul. So it shall. But not as they think. The being of the body and the being of the soul go to form one being. Those souls who all their days have spent their time in God till God has come to be their being, to them God stays their being, body and soul eternally. Not so the wicked who have squandered their time on creatures ; what their state is it continues to be, and this eternal lapsing from God and from his friends is called hell. Yet bear in mind that these same persons get their being from God or they would not be at all. So they are in God and God is in them. You see, they have the being of God. Take it like this. They are in God as 'twere a man with his life forfeit to some righteous lord whose honour he has stolen and whose friends, and plotted frequently against his life ; and now his lord, who showed him only kindness in hopes of his reform, is vexed to find that he declines to mend. Holding him in the grip of justice, his lord forbears to kill. He punishes the outrage on himself. First, bound hand and foot, the man is cast into the lowest donjon among toads and reptiles and the foul water which is wont to lie in deepest donjon-keeps. Fetched up from thence, he is disgraced before the world, that they may see his open shame and he their joy. So much the more his torment. Insult after insult do they heap upon him, shame unthinkable ; he is ever cast back into his donjon, ever in dread of execution. Even so it is permissible to say that man is at the court, for the donjon is the royal court as much as the hall is where the king stays with his friends ; but conditions, you see, are different. Though not with that celestial race we spoke of. Know that grief endures eternally. I marvel that anyone who hears these words should dare to sin. Purgatory is so grievous in itself that anyone who knows the rights of it would stay no time in sin. Purgatory you must know is temporal and notional. A soul which leaves the body, as I said, in faith and love and will to do all for God's sake and eschew sin for God, that soul is in dire distress, unable to do anything but wait till God shall deign to take compassion on her. And though this happen not till doomsday, the hope is her life. Doomsday past, this is over. But souls in the divine condition are not affected in this sense : on quitting the body such a soul remains in a condition of divinity determined by her knowledge

and love of God, and after the day of judgment the being of the body and the being of the soul are one being in the divine actuality. According to the most reliable authorities, statements of theirs regarding creatures are not to be construed to mean that John went body and soul to heaven ; no more did others of our Lord's friends either, of whom report says they are body and soul in God, transcending time in eternity. It is not possible. In God can be nothing but God, not mouth nor nose nor hand nor foot nor any creature pertaining to the body. So they cannot be held to have got there in the body. We may reasonably suppose that when the time came for John to go, God caused to befall him what was due to happen on the day of judgment. He did this for true love's sake, because he was so pure. The being of his soul, taking with it, God helping, the being of his body, was drawn up. We may take it that his body, which was destined to perish here on earth, was disintegrated in the air, so that there entered into God only the being of the body, which would have accompanied the soul at the last day. Thus it befell Mary and all of whom it is related that they attained to God in the body.'

' 'Tis well argued,' he said. ' But you must know the question is in hot dispute among the theologians.' Said she, ' I will give you the key to its solution. Pass to our Lord Jesus Christ and see what happened at his ascension. He was at meat when he ascended. As you well know, the food was lost in transit, with everything adventitious that Christ had taken on, which all remained in time. He could only take with him into the Father that which came out of the Father. The being of Christ's soul took with it the being of the noble manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ in its divine actuality. The persons subsist in the Father as one with the Father. Even so are all those in the Father who conquer by grace what Christ has by nature : not that they take with them the life of the body when they go hence ; that waits till doomsday. The being of the body reverts to the being of the soul only when all things have perished, according to the vulgar teaching. You doubtless know that whom God deigns to favour he treats as he treated St John.' Quoth he, ' I wot that well. If I did as St Dominic, I should be as St Dominic. St Dominic sold his book and all he possessed and gave to the poor for God's sake. We do not this, daughter, nor do we practise numerous other virtues of St Dominic. We are as we are through pretending a priesthood we do not possess. St Francis was a simple soul wherefor God greatly favoured him. He approached God in perfect simplicity of life and so grew familiar with God. Now in those parts there was a priest who sorely hated a profane to be so intimate with God. Going to visit him, he said, " What

shall we make of this, brother ? The scriptures say we must rebuke men for their sins."—" Assuredly," said St Francis.—" But," said the priest, " did I rebuke a man, he might repay me twofold."—" How should he ? " said St Francis. " I can rede you the scriptures better than that : we are to cultivate the true and perfect life, within and without, till we become a living rebuke to all mankind." —" True, brother," said the priest ashamed.—Know that to do as St Francis is to become as St Francis. Further, I hold : when we depart this life, grace departs from us. And again : to be less than St John is to be more than St John.'—' Thank God, you know it,' she exclaimed. He said, ' I have known it for long, and I ween it is true, though I do not live it.'—' That I rue,' she said.

Quoth she, ' You have told me of nine heavens. Now tell me what I ask. Advise me what sort of life to lead, for you know my life better than anyone.'—' Indeed I will,' said he, ' and gladly. Eat when thou art hungry, drink when thou art thirsty, wear fine linen, sleep and take thine ease ; gratify thy tastes in meats and drinks and, for a season, study thyself, live for thyself alone. An thou shouldst see God's whole creation swallowed up before thine eyes, avert it not with so much as an *Ave Maria*, but summon all creatures at will to do thy bidding to the glory of God. Wear delicate, beautiful raiment, and, abiding in one place, carry all things up to God. Dost thou choose to enjoy creatures, it is seemly so to do, seeing that any creature thou enjoyest thou dost render to its cause. Thou wilt know full well that everything thou enjoyest is in God to God's glory.' She said, ' I know right well that all you say is true but you must understand I never shall want anything except to be a beggar till I die.'—' Thou art mistook,' he said.—' Then mistaken I will remain,' said she. ' I choose poverty and exile ; that none can take from me.'—' On my soul, thou art false to God,' he cried.—' How so ? ' she asked. ' Just pleasing thyself,' he answered. Quoth she, ' God knows I am but keeping on the lines that led me to eternal happiness. The natural error of those lines in time and in eternity shall be mine too in eternity and time. I will not deviate from the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He said, ' Thou shouldst know that. God prosper thee.' Then she : ' Believe me, I do take more ease ; my discipline is not so strict as heretofore. If only I might forward on their way good souls approaching their eternal happiness but lacking certainty, that I fain would do ; I would fain succour the whole world from sin for God's sake. Since our Lord Jesus Christ made use of all his faculties up to his death, 'tis meet I should do likewise. My outer faculties shall occupy themselves with the exalted life and noble manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ

and with his lofty teachings, during my life in time. The highest powers of my soul will, as you know, be working in Christ's soul in his heavenly Father, subsistent in one nature they never stoop from. The Holy Ghost flows from the Father through these powers into my soul and back from my soul into God, each several power doing its own work, here in the Holy Ghost and, in the Father, with his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Regard it as an intercourse. He knows all my days from the time I discerned good and evil.'

'Tell me, daughter,' he said, 'doctors declare that in heaven a thousand angels can stand on the point of a needle. Now rede me the meaning of this?' She answered, 'The doctors are right. You can see it in this way. The soul that enters into God owns neither time nor space nor anything nameable to be expressed in words. But it stands to reason, if you consider it, that the space occupied by any soul is vastly greater than heaven and earth and God's entire creation. I say more: God might make heavens and earths galore yet these, together with the multiplicity of creatures he has already made, would be of less extent than a single needle-tip compared with the standpoint of a soul atoned in God.' —So the daughter went on, till her talk turning upon God, she waxed most eloquent, the father urging her at intervals: 'Say on, daughter.' She imparted to him so much concerning the immensity of God, the might of God and the providence of God, that he took leave of his outer senses and they had to carry him into a neighbouring cell where he lay for long ere coming to himself again. Returning to himself, he desired his daughter to come to him. Admitted to his presence, his daughter inquired, 'How is it now with you?'—'Excellently well,' he answered. 'God be praised for sending thee to a man. Thou didst show me the way to my eternal happiness, and I have been deep in divine contemplation where there was given me the realization of all I have heard from thy lips. Daughter I adjure thee, by thy love to God, help me by word and deed to win a permanent abode where now I am.' Quoth she, 'Impossible. You are not tempered to it. When, soul and faculties, you are as used to going up and down as a courtier is to going to and fro at court; when you recognise the various members of the heavenly company and everything God ever made and fail in nothing but know them as the good man knows the members of his household, then you will distinguish between God and Godhead; then too you see the difference between spirit and spirituality. Till then you are not qualified for confirmation. Do not run away; wrestle awhile with creatures till you are independent of them and they, as such, of you. So shall you cultivate your faculties without going demented. This

do until your soul-powers are stimulated to the consciousness we have been speaking of.'

Blessed and praised be the sweet name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VII

SIGNS OF THE TRUE GROUND

According to one master, many people arrive at specific understanding, at formal, notional knowledge, but there are few who get beyond the science and the theory ; yet one man whose mind is free from notions and from forms is more dear to God than the hundred thousand who have the habit of discursive reason. God cannot enter in and do his work in them owing to the restlessness of their imagination. If they were free from pictures they could be caught and carried up beyond all rational concepts, as St Dionysius says, and also have the super-rational light of faith at its starting-point, where God finds his rest and peace to dwell and work in as he will and when he will and what he will. God is unhindered in his work in these so he can do in them his most precious work of all, working them up in faith into himself. These people no one can make out ; their life is an enigma, and their ways, to all who do not live the same. To this truth and to this blessed life, to this high and perfect consummation no one can attain except in abstract knowledge and pure understanding.

Many a lofty intellect, angels not excepting (for in life and nature an angel is nothing but pure mind), has erred and lapsed eternally from the eternal truth and this may happen also to those who, like the angels, preserve their idiosyncrasy and find satisfaction in the exercise of their own intelligence. Hence the masters urge, and the saints as well, the use and the necessity of careful observation and close scrutiny to test the light which flashes in, the light of understanding and of vision which man has here in time, lest he be the subject of hallucination. If you would know and recognise the really sane and genuine seers of God, whom nothing can deceive nor misinform, they can be detected by four and twenty signs.

The first sign is told us by the chief exponent of knowledge and wisdom and transcendental understanding, who is himself the truth, our Lord Jesus Christ. He says, ' Thereby ye shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another and keep my commandment. What is my commandment ? That ye love one another as I have loved you,' as though to say, ye may be my disciples in knowledge and in wisdom and high understanding but without true love it shall avail you little if anything at all.

Balaam was so clever he understood what God for many hundred years had been trying to reveal. This was but little help to him because he lacked true love. And Lucifer, the angel, who is in hell, had perfectly pure intellect and to this day knows much. He has the more hell pain and all because he failed to cleave with love and faith to what he knew.—The second sign is selflessness : they empty themselves out of themselves giving free furlough to things.—The third sign : they have wholly abandoned themselves to God : God works in them undisturbed.—The fourth sign : wherever they still find themselves they leave themselves ; sure method of advancement.—The fifth sign : they are free from all self-seeking : this gives them a clear conscience.—The sixth sign : they wait unceasingly upon God's will and do it to their utmost. —The seventh sign : they bend their will to God's will till their will coincides with God's.—The eighth sign : so closely do they fit and bind themselves to God and God to them in the power of love, that God does nothing without them and they do nothing without God.—The ninth sign : they naught themselves and make use of God in all their works and in all places and all things.—The tenth sign : they take no single thing from any creature, neither good nor bad, but all from God alone, albeit God effect it through his creature.—The eleventh sign : they are not snared by any pleasure or physical enjoyment or by any creature.—The twelfth sign : they are not forced or driven by insubordination : they are steadfast for the truth.—The thirteenth sign : they are not misled by any spurious light nor by the look of any creature : they go by the intrinsic merit.—The fourteenth sign : armed and arrayed with all the virtues they emerge victorious from every fight with vice.—The fifteenth sign : they see and know the naked truth and praise God without ceasing for this gnosis.—The sixteenth sign : perfect and just, they hold themselves in poor esteem.—The seventeenth sign : they are chary of words and prodigal of works. —The eighteenth sign : they preach to the world by right practice. —The nineteenth sign : they are always seeking God's glory and nothing at all besides.—The twentieth sign : if any man fight them they will let him prevail before accepting help of any sort but God's.—The twenty-first sign : they desire neither comfort nor possessions, of the least of which they deem themselves all undeserving.—The twenty-second sign : they look upon themselves as the most unworthy of all mankind on earth ; their humbleness is therefore never-failing.—The twenty-third sign : they take the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ for the perfect exemplar of their lives and in the light of this are always examining themselves with the sole intention of removing all unlikeness to their high ideal.—The twenty-fourth sign : to outward appearance they

do little who are working all the time at the virtuous life, hence the disesteem of many people, which, however, they prefer to vulgar approbation.

These are the signs of the true ground wherein lives the image of the perfect truth and he who does not find them in himself may account his knowledge vain and so may other people.

VIII[1]

THE BIRTH OF THE ETERNAL WORD IN THE SOUL

Now we will speak of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as he is born to-day at this holy season of the Virgin Mary his blessed mother and again as he is born of grace in the perfect soul for that is the whole end of Christ's work on earth; and we shall ask nine questions from which any pious man may tell whether the eternal Word is born in him or no.

The first question is, how to prepare for the interior speaking of the eternal Word?—Several things are needed. First, purity of life and mind. Next, the peace and freedom of a still and silent heart which is speaking to no creature and is spoken to by none, whether of the senses or the spirit. And now for a hard saying which few will understand: while the soul is speaking her own word and her noble word, the Father cannot speak his Word in her; while the soul is begetting her own son, *i.e.* the noblest work of her own understanding, the Father is not able to beget his Son in her to her best advantage. Thirdly, the soul must forsake herself in order to conceive the eternal Word like St Paul and Mary, God's mother, in whom the eternal Word was uttered perfectly. The mind must die to itself, disowning itself and becoming God's own. Fourthly, the mind must lift up its intellect and see, for seeing is the lustiest work and noblest of which the soul is capable. Mark how eagerly he comes; he says, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock!' Fifthly, it behoves us greatly to desire this birth, for desire is the root of all virtue and goodness.

The second question is, what is God's birth in the soul? God's birth in the soul is nothing else than a special divine motion in a special heavenly mode whereby God wrests the spirit from the tumult of creaturely unrest into his motionless unity where God can communicate himself to the soul in his divinity. There man enjoys his Word in the Father in its first discriminate emanation and with the Father as essential Person and in the Holy Ghost as the limit set to their eternal bliss, and it is in the soul as the reflection of her intellectual proto-

[1] See also Greith, pp. 102, 103.

type and in all creatures as the preserver of their being. For God speaks his Word in every creature, but no creature is aware of it save rational creatures only. The soul is reborn into God when she turns to God and pursues his eternal Word right into his paternal heart where God makes naked revelation of his birth to the soul. The soul falls upon this birth which is revealed to her, with love and knowledge. As the Father comes into the soul in his Word so in the Word the soul is returned into the Father. That we may eternally play this game in God, God help us.

The third question is, can any man be so well prepared that God is obliged to speak his eternal Word in him ? We know that God must fulfil two obligations. First, when God is pledged and bound to the soul by the bonds of mutual love. Then God never fails the soul provided she is ready ; he is obliged of mutual necessity to give himself to her, as Christ said to Zaccheus, ' This day I must abide with thee in thine house.' There is another word that must be spoken. Every good thing communicates itself to whatever is able to receive it ; it would therefore be contrary to God's goodness to withhold himself from us if we can take him in. And there is a third compulsory utterance, that of some cause or force which is inadmissible in God. Theologians tell us that works wrought by the soul with God and in his grace God rewards or not just as he chooses, for such works are creature and finite and befall in time. They are too insignificant and vile to deserve reward from God at all. But the work God does in us without our co-operation, where the soul's work fails and God's activity prevails, in that the soul is merely passive and God is the only one who works. Works wrought thus by God in the soul it is his bounden duty to requite with his own self, for these works are so divine, so eternal, so immense and so nearly touch God's honour, he has no guerdon for them but himself. These souls are the noblest product of this life and it is of them St John declares, ' Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' The outward world is dead to them as they are also to the world. Their outward man can no more clash with their inner man than the dead can with the living and this is due to the gift of God and interior prayer and profound humility. Which God grant us.

The fourth question is, what particular place or power of the soul the eternal Word is born in ? The philosophers and saints have many fine sayings about this. Some say, in the intellect for that is most like God. Some say, in the will for that is the free power of the soul. A third school teaches, in the soul-spark because that is most nigh to God. A fourth, in the arcanum of the mind for it is there that God is most at home. A fifth school says (and it is with this one that I hold), that it is born in the

innermost being of the soul and all her powers are made aware of it in a divine savour, each power in its own mode but intellect is the highest power of the soul and therewith the soul grasps the divine good. Free will is the power of relishing the divine good which intellect makes known to it. The spark of the soul is the light of God's reflection, which is always looking back to God. The arcanum of the mind is the sum-total, as it were, of all the divine good and divine gifts in the innermost essence of the soul, which is as a bottomless well of divine goodness. Which may God grant us.

The fifth question is, what part does the mind play in this birth? It enters a condition of complete passivity leaving God to work his will in perfect liberty. Perhaps it may be asked, Is the mind aware that God is working in it? I answer: Virtue, all good works wrought by God in man, fervour and devotion for example, a man will be aware of, for with works of this kind there is very often the evidence of the senses. But when the divine good overwhelms with its riches the appetitive faculty and the light of God raises the intellect to a higher power, coercing or carrying the mind into his divine countenance, then the mind pays no more attention to creatures: she is standing face to face with the highest truth. Which may God give us.

The sixth question is, what part is played by the body in this? It is resting peacefully, incapable of movement in any of its members, for the superior powers have fetched home the lower, and the essence of the soul has absorbed her higher powers so all is at a stand-still while the eternal Word is being born, in the mind and in the body. So help us God.

The seventh question is, can no power of the soul remain at work while the eternal Word is being supernaturally born in this way in the soul? The answer is this. The soul has two kinds of powers, and of these the outward senses of the body are all at rest and also the powers which move the body have been fetched in so that none of her powers remain active, but the soul is merely the motionless form of the body. As the prophet says, 'When all things were in mid-silence God spake his silent Word into my soul.' Motionless peace descends upon the body and the mind wherein the eternal birth is to be supernaturally conceived. To attain to this we must be like the shepherds watching in the night wherein Christ was born. So must a man keep watch and ward over his own mind, driving his intelligence up into the heights, to those eternal laws ordained by God for lost and saved.[1] Let us beseech him daily to carry out in us his eternal laws and rules. For

[1] Referring to the soul-spark or synteresis, sometimes identified with conscience regarded as the internal repository of the laws of right and wrong.

priests and religious the seven hours are ordained that they may thank God for his death and pray him to accomplish his eternal rules and laws in us. And you who know this truth better than others do should let your minds dwell more upon this birth than other people can who are ignorant about it. God help us to the truth.

The eighth question is, what fruits or gifts are granted to the soul in whom the eternal Word is spoken ? Him four things befall. The first is that he is united with God. Next, he becomes God's Son by grace. Thirdly, he is made God's heir. Fourthly, he is loosed from bondage ; as St Paul, naming all four perfections, says, ' In Christ is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free ; but ye are all one in Christ and are sons of God. And if sons of God then heirs of God.' May we being loosed from bondage be God's sons, so help us God.

[1] Now, taking as my text, ' This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' I will set forth the things a man must have in order to be God's Son by grace. First, he must have perfect self-control, as the Lord Christ says, ' I have power to lay down my soul and take it up again.' Meaning, he is not cast down by suffering and adversity nor puffed up by worldly happiness and prosperity. Secondly, he must have his mind ever charged with divine ideas and godly sayings. Thirdly, he must have the highest good ever present to his mind so far as his nature will allow. Fourthly, he must steadfastly abide therein so far as his nature can endure it. Fifthly, if he go out into creatures for the needs of life he must not tarry there longer than is necessary. Sixthly, what his mind conceives of from within of divine mystery or truth he must protect from nature as a rich man guards his treasure from robbers and from thieves. In the seventh place, he must make no attempt to express these things in words until the time is ripe, that is, until he puts them into practice. Eighth, he must know well enough and consider fit any person he reveals these secrets to : the fool confides in all the world but the wise in few. Ninthly, he must be gracious alike to yea and nay. Tenth, he must be indifferent about what God has done to him and is going to do. [Eleventh, it must not concern him what God has done or is to do.] Twelfth, he must behave impartially to those whom God has chosen or not chosen [to those to whom his grace has or has not been given]; and all these things he must offer up to the glory of God, obeying the divine command that what pleases God shall please him also and saying with Christ, ' Father,

[1] The rest of this tractate occurs also in Hermann von Fritslar's *Das Heiligenleben* (see Pfeiffer's *Deutsche Mystiker*, vol. i, p. 54), from which the words in brackets are added.

thy will not mine be done.' These twelve articles, with the preceding four, set forth the highest life that can be led in time. Of him who has these things may the Father say, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' And he who has them not but defaults therein, his defects are what St Augustine calls spiritual sins.

The ninth question is, how to recognise these people in whom the eternal Word is born ghostly and gratuitously? I answer, by the following signs. The first is that these people are dead to flesh and blood and to all natural appetites, as St Paul says, 'Since the eternal Word was born in me I no longer live to flesh and blood.' Secondly the pleasures of the body [the triumphs of the world], are like sour breath unto their soul. As St Gregory declares, 'Worldly joys and glories are nothing but untowardness. Thirdly, these people are for ever listening for God's voice in them, David says, 'I will hearken to what God the Lord shall say within me.' Fourthly, they are not perturbed by the uncertainty of things: nothing vexes or depresses them, as Christ said to his disciples, 'In your patience possess ye your souls.' Fifthly, these people turn everything to good account so nothing can corrupt them, but they are ever pure in heart; as St Paul says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' Sixthly, they have no desire to vie with anyone; they live in the world as though there was no one but themselves and God. Wherefore their heavenly Father begets his Son in them unceasingly and this birth is for all who give their mind thereto.

The Lord Christ calls himself the flower of the field, for this is common property. Even so this birth is the common property of all those who are ready and diligently longing to receive it. May we thus desire this birth and eternally enjoy it, So help us God. Amen.

IX

DETACHMENT [1]

I have read many writings of heathen philosophers and sages, of the old covenant and of the new, and have sought earnestly and with all diligence which is the best and highest virtue whereby a man may knit himself most narrowly to God and wherein he is most like to his exemplar, as he was in God, wherein was no difference between himself and God, ere God created creature. And having approfounded all these scriptures to the best of my ability, I find it is none other than absolute detachment from all creatures.

[1] See also Spamer, B. 4.

As our Lord said to Martha, '*unum est necessarium*,' which is as good as saying, He who would be serene and pure needs but one thing, detachment.

Our doctors sing love's praises, as did St Paul, who said, 'Whatsoever things I do and have not charity I am nothing.' But I extol detachment above any love. First, because at best love constrains me to love God. Now it is far better my constraining God to me than for me to be constrained to God. My eternal happiness depends on God and me becoming one; but God is apter to adapt himself to me and can easier communicate with me than I can communicate with God. Detachment forces God to come to me, and this is shown as follows. Everything is fain to be in its own natural state. But God's own natural state is unity and purity and these come from detachment. Hence God is bound to give himself to a heart detached.—Secondly, I rank detachment above love because love constrains me to suffer all things for God's sake: detachment constrains me to admit nothing but God. Now it is far better to tolerate nothing but God than to suffer all things for God's sake. For in suffering one has regard to creatures, whence the suffering comes, but detachment is immune from creature. Further, that detachment admits of none but God I demonstrate in this wise: anything received must be received in aught. But detachment is so nearly naught that there is nothing rare enough to stay in this detachment, except God. He is so simple, so ethereal, that he can sojourn in the solitary heart. Detachment then admits of God alone. That which is received is received and grasped by its receiver according to the mode of the receiver; and so anything conceived is known and understood according to the mind of him who understands and not according to its own innate conceivability.

And humility the masters laud beyond most other virtues. I rank detachment before any meekness and for the following reasons. Meekness can be without detachment, but complete detachment is impossible without humility. Perfect humility is a matter of self-naughting; but detachment so narrowly approximates to naught that no room remains for aught betwixt zero and absolute detachment. Wherefore without humility is no complete detachment. Withal two virtues are always better than one.—Another reason why I put detachment higher than humility is this: humility means abasing self before all creatures and in that same abasement one goes out of oneself to creatures. But detachment abideth in itself. Now no going out however excellent, but staying in is better still. As the prophet hath it, '*omnis gloria filiæ regis ab intus*,' the king's daughter is all glorious within. Perfect detachment is without regard, without either lowliness or

loftiness to creatures : it has no mind to be below nor yet to be above ; it is minded to be master of itself, loving none and hating none, having neither likeness nor unlikeness, neither this nor that, to any creature ; the only thing it fain would be is *same.* But to be either this or that it does not want at all. He who is this or that is aught ; but detachment is altogether naught. It leaves things unmolested.

Here someone may object, But surely in our Lady all the virtues flourished in perfection and among them absolute detachment. Now granting that detachment is better than humility, why did our Lady glory in her lowliness instead of her detachment, saying, '*quia respexit dominus humilitatem ancillæ suæ*' : 'He regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden' ?

I answer that, in God there is detachment and humility as well, so far as virtues can be attributed to God. Know, it was his loving meekness that made God stoop to enter human nature while it remained within itself as motionless, what time he was made man, as it was while he created the heavens and the earth, as I shall show you later. And seeing that our Lord when he chose to be made man did persist in his motionless detachment, by that same token did our Lady know that he expected her to do the same, albeit for the nonce he had regard expressly to her lowliness and not to her detachment. So remaining unmoved in her detachment she yet gloried in her lowliness and not in her detachment. Had she but once remembered her detachment to say, 'He regarded my detachment,' her detachment would by that have been disturbed and would not have been absolute and perfect since a going forth has taken place. Any event, however insignificant, will always cause some troubling of detachment. There you have the explanation of our Lady's glorying in her lowliness instead of her detachment. Quoth the prophet, '*audiani, quid loquatur in me dominus deus,*' 'I will be still and listen to what my Lord and my God may be saying within me,' as though to say, if God would parley with me then he must come in for I will not go out. It is Boëthius who exclaims, 'Ye men, why do ye look without for that which is within you ? '

I prize detachment more than mercy too, for mercy means naught else but a man's going forth of self by reason of his fellow-creatures' lack, whereby his heart is wrung. Detachment is exempt from this ; it stays within itself permitting nothing to disturb it. In short, when I reflect on all the virtues I find not one so wholly free from fault, so unitive to God as is detachment.

It was Avicenna the philosopher who said, 'The mind detached is of such nobility that what it sees is true, what it desires befalls and its behests must be obeyed.' For you must know that when

the free mind is quite detached it constrains God to itself and could it remain formless and free from adventitiousness it would take on the nature of God. But God grants this to none beside himself; so God can do no more for the solitary soul than make it a present of himself. The man who is in absolute detachment is rapt away into eternity where nothing temporal affects him nor is he in the least aware of any mortal thing; he has the world well dead, he having no relish for aught earthly. St Paul meant this when he declared, 'I live and yet not I: Christ liveth in me.'

Peradventure thou wilt say, What then is detachment that it should be so noble in itself?—True detachment means a mind as little moved by what befalls, by joy and sorrow, honour and disgrace, as a broad mountain by a gentle breeze. Such motionless detachment makes a man superlatively Godlike. For that God is God is due to his motionless detachment, and it is from his detachment that he gets his purity and his simplicity and his immutability. If then a man is going to be like God, so far as any creature can resemble God, it will be by detachment. This leads to purity and from purity to simplicity and from simplicity to immovability; and it is these three which constitute the likeness between man and God, which likeness is in grace, for it is grace which draws a man away from mortal things and purges him from things corruptible. I would have you know that to be empty of creatures is to be full of God and to be full of creatures is to be empty of God.

Now it must be remembered that in this immutable detachment God has stood for aye and does still stand. Know also, that when God created the heavens and the earth he might not have been making anything at all for all that it affected his detachment. Nay, I say more: prayers and good works wrought by a man in time affect no more the divine detachment than if no prayers nor virtuous works had come to pass in time; nor is God any kindlier disposed towards that wight than if his prayers and deeds had all been left undone. Further I declare, when the Son in his Godhead was pleased to be made man and was and suffered martyrdom, God's motionless detachment was no more disturbed than if he had never been made man.

Haply thou wilt say, I gather then that prayers and virtuous deeds are all in vain; God takes too little interest in them to be affected by them. And yet they say God likes to be entreated upon all occasions.

Now mark, and realize if possible, that in his first eternal glance (if a first glance may be assumed), God saw all things as they would happen and he saw in that same glance both when and how he would make creatures. He saw the humblest prayer that

would be offered, the least good deed that anyone would do and saw withal which prayers and which devotions he would hear. He saw that to-morrow thou shalt call upon him earnestly, urgently entreating him; and not for the first time to-morrow will God grant thy supplication and thy prayer: he has granted it already in his eternity ere ever thou becamest man. Suppose thy prayer is foolish or lacking earnestness, God will deny it thee not then, he has denied it thee already in his eternity. Thus God, who has seen everything in that first eternal glance, in no wise acts from any why at all, for everything is a foregone conclusion.

And though God does stay all the while in motionless detachment yet are men's prayers and virtuous works not all in vain, he who does well being well rewarded. As Philippus says, 'God creator holds all things in the course and order he has given them from the beginning.' With him nothing is past and nothing future, who has loved all his saints even as he foresaw them ere ever the world became. Yet when there come to pass in time the things he speculated in eternity then people think that God has changed his mind, though whether he be wrathful or benignant it is we who change and he remains the same; just as the sunshine hurts weak eyes and benefits the strong ones what time the light itself remains unchanged. God does not see in time nor is his outlook subject to renewal. Isodorus argues in this sense in his book on the Arch-Good. He says, People are always asking what God did before he created the heavens and the earth and whence there came to God the new will to make creatures? His answer is that no new will at all arose in God; for what though creature was not in itself as it is now yet it was from eternity in God and in his mind. God did not make the heavens and the earth as we should say, man-fashion, 'Let them be!' but creatures are all spoken in his eternal Word. Moses said to God, 'Lord, if Pharaoh ask me who thou art, what am I to say?' And God replied, 'Say, He-who-is hath sent me.' Or in other words, He who is unchanging in himself, he it is hath sent me.

Here someone may object, But was Christ in motionless detachment when he cried, 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death!' Or Mary when she stood beneath his cross? yet much is said about her lamentations. How is all this compatible with motionless detachment?—Know then, that according to philosophers there are in everyone two men: one, the outward man, is his objective nature; this man is served by the five senses, albeit he is energised by the power of the soul. The other one, the inner man, is man's subjective nature. Now I would have you know that the Godly-minded man employs his soul-powers in his outward man no more than his five senses really need it; and his interior man

only has recourse to the five senses so far as it is guide and keeper to these five senses and can stop them being put to bestial uses as they so often are by those who live according to the baser appetites, as do the mindless beasts, and who deserve the name of beast rather than that of man. What surplus energy she has beyond what she expends on her five senses the soul bestows upon her inner man, and supposing he has toward some right high endeavour she will call in all the powers she has loaned to the five senses and then the man is said to be senseless and rapt away, his object being either some unintelligible form or some formless intelligible. Remember, God requires every spiritual man to love him with all the powers of his soul. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' he says. Some squander all their soul-powers on their outward man. Namely, those whose thoughts and feelings hinge on temporal goods, all unwitting of an inner man. And even as the virtuous man will now and then deprive his outward self of all the powers of the soul what time he is embarking on some high adventure, so bestial man will rob his inner self of all its soul-powers to expend them on his outer man. Withal it must be realized that the outward man is able to be active and leave the inward man entirely passive and unmoved. Now in Christ too existed an outward and an inward man and also in our Lady, and what Christ and our Lady said concerning outward things was prompted by their outward man, the inner man remaining in motionless detachment. So was it when Christ said, 'My soul is sorrowful unto death.' And despite her lamentations and various things she said, Our Lady, in her inner man, stood all the while in motionless detachment. Take an illustration. The door goes to and fro upon its hinges. Now the projecting door I liken to the outward man and the hinge I liken to the inner man. As it shuts and opens the door swings to and fro while the hinge remains unmoved in the same place without undergoing any change. And likewise here.

What then, I ask, is the object of absolute detachment? I answer, that the object of absolute detachment is neither this nor that. It is absolutely nothing, for it is the culminating point where God can do precisely as he will. God cannot have his way in every heart, for though God is almighty yet he cannot work except where he finds readiness or makes it. I add, or makes it, by reason of St Paul in whom he found no readiness but whom he did make ready by infusion of his grace; wherefore I affirm, God works according to the aptitude he finds. He works differently in man and in a stone, and for this we have a natural analogy. If you heat a baker's oven and place in it the dough, some made of barley, some of oats and some of wheat and some of rye, then albeit in

the oven the heat is all the same it does not tell alike on all the doughs, but one yields a fine bread, another one more coarse and a third a coarser still. The heat is not to blame : it is the material which differs. Nor does God tell alike on every heart but according to the readiness and the capacity he finds. In any heart containing this or that there is something to hinder God's highest operation. For a heart to be perfectly ready it has to be perfectly empty, this being its condition of maximum capacity. To take another common illustration. Suppose I want to write on a white tablet, then anything already written there, however excellent it be, will interfere and hinder me from writing ; ere I can write I must erase completely whatever is already on the tablet which is never better fitted for me to write upon than when there is nothing there at all. And so for God to write his very best within my heart everything dubbed this or that must be ousted from my heart leaving it quite without attachment. God is free to work his sovran will when the object of this solitary heart is neither this nor that.

Then again I ask, What is the prayer of the solitary heart ? I answer, that detachment and emptiness cannot pray at all, for whoso prays desires of God something : something added to him or something taken from him. But the heart detached has no desire for anything nor has it anything to be delivered from. So it has no prayers at all ; its only prayer consists in being uniform with God. In this sense we may take St Dionysius' comment on the saying of St Paul, ' Many there be that run but one receiveth the prize.' All the powers of the soul competing for the crown which falls to the essence alone. According to Dionysius this running is none other than the flight from creature to union with uncreated nature. Attaining this the soul loses her name ; God absorbs her in himself so that as self she comes to naught, just as the sunlight swallows up the dawn and naughts it. To this pass nothing brings the soul but absolute detachment. And here it is germane to quote St Augustine's dictum : ' The soul has a private door into divine nature at the point where for her things all come to naught.' This door on earth is none other than absolute detachment. At the height of her detachment she is ignorant with knowing, loveless with loving, dark with enlightenment.

Here too we might cite a master's words, Blessed are the spiritual poor who have abandoned unto God all things as he possessed them when we existed not. This none can do but a heart wholly without attachment.

That God would sooner be in a solitary heart than any other, I argue in this fashion. Starting from thy question, What does God seek in all things ? I answer in his words out of the Book of

Wisdom, ' In all things I seek rest.' Now there is nowhere perfect rest save in a heart detached. Ergo, God is happier there than in any other thing or virtue. Know that the more we are disposed to receive the inflowing God, the more happy we shall be ; perfect receptivity gives perfect felicity. Now one makes oneself receptive to the influence of God only by dint of uniformity with God ; as a man's uniformity with God so is his sense of the inflow of God. Uniformity comes of subjection to God, and the more one is subject to creature the less one is uniform with God. But the heart which is quite detached and all devoid of creatures, being utterly subject to God and uniform with God in the highest measure, is wholly receptive of his divine inflow. Hence St Paul's exhortation to ' Put on Christ,' *i.e.* uniformity with Christ. For know, when Christ was made man it was not a certain man that he assumed, he assumed human nature. Do thou go out of all things, then there remains alone what Christ put on and thou hast put on Christ.

Whoso has a mind to know the excellence and use of absolute detachment let him lay to heart Christ's words to his disciples touching his manhood : ' It is good for you that I go away ; if I go not away the comforter cannot come unto you ' ; as though to say, ye have too much love for my visible form for the perfect love of the Holy Ghost to be yours. Wherefore discard the form and unite with the formless essence, for God's ghostly comfort is intangible and is not offered save to those alone who despise all mortal consolations.

List ye, good people all : there is none happier than he who stands in uttermost detachment. No temporal, carnal pleasure but brings some ghostly mischief in its train, for the flesh lusts after things that run counter to the spirit and spirit lusts for things that are repugnant to the flesh. He who sows the tares of love in flesh reaps death but he who sows good love-seed in the spirit reaps of the spirit eternal life. The more man flees from creatures the faster hastens to him their creator. Consider, all ye thoughtful souls ! If even the love which it is given us to feel for the bodily form of Christ can keep us from receiving the Holy Ghost then how much more must we be kept from getting God by inordinate love of creature comforts ? Detachment is the best of all, for it cleanses the soul, clarifies the mind, kindles the heart and wakes the spirit ; it quickens desire and enhances virtue giving intuition of God ; it detaches creature and makes her one with God ; for love disjoined from God is as water in the fire, but love in union is like the honeycomb in honey. Harkee, all rational souls ! The swiftest steed to bear you to your goal is suffering ; none shall ever taste eternal bliss but those who stand with Christ in depths of bitterness.

Nothing is more gall-bitter than suffering, nothing so honey-sweet as to have suffered. The most sure foundation for this perfection is humility, for he whose nature here creeps in deepest depths shall soar in spirit to highest height of Deity ; for joy brings sorrow and sorrow brings joy. Men's ways are manifold : one lives thus, another thus. He who would attain unto the highest life while here in time, let him take in a few words culled out of all the scriptures the summary philosophy which I will now set down.

Keep thyself detached from all mankind ; keep thyself devoid of all incoming images ; emancipate thyself from everything which entails addition, attachment or encumbrance, and address thy mind at all times to a saving contemplation wherein thou bearest God fixed within thy heart as the object from which its eyes do never waver ; any other discipline, fasts, vigils, prayers, or whatever it may be, subordinate to this as to its end, using thereof no more than shall answer for this purpose, so shalt thou win the goal of all perfections.

Here someone may object, But who can persist in unwavering contemplation of the divine object ? I answer, no one living here in time. This is told thee merely so that thou mayst know the highest, that whereon thy aspirations and desires should be set. But when this vision is withheld from thee, thou, being a good man, shalt think to have been robbed of thy eternal bliss and then do thou forthwith return into the same that it may come to thee again ; and withal it does behove thee to keep strict watch upon thy thoughts at all times, there letting, as far as possible, their goal and refuge be. Lord God, glory be to thee eternally. Amen.

X

SPIRITUAL POVERTY

Beati pauperes spiritu etc. Let us be eternally as poor as we were when we eternally were not. Abiding in him in our essence we shall be that we are. We shall abound in all things, but in their creator. We shall know God without any sort of likeness and love without matter and enjoy without possession. We shall conceive all things in perfection as the eternal wisdom shows them planned out in itself.

The poor in spirit go out of themselves and all creatures : they are nothing, they have nothing, they do nothing, and these poor are not save that by grace they are God with God : which they are not aware of. St Augustine says, all things are God. St Dionysius says, things are not God. St Augustine says, God is all of them. But Dionysius : God is nothing we can say or think, yet

God is the hope of all the saints, their intuition of him wherein he is himself. He (Dionysius) finds him more in naught; God is naught, he says. In naught all is suspended. All that has being is in suspension in naught, this naught being itself an incomprehensible aught that all the minds in heaven and on earth cannot either fathom or conceive. Hence it remains unknown to creatures. When the soul attains to the perfection of hanging to (being suspended from) naught she will find herself without sin. This is due to the freedom she is poised in. Then on coming to the body and awareness of herself, and again finding sin as before, she becomes bound and then she returns into herself and bethinks her of what she has found yonder. Thus she raises herself up above herself and crosses over to the seat of all her happiness and all her satisfaction. St Bernard says the soul knows very well that her beloved cannot come to her till everything is out of her. St Augustine says, Well and truly loves the man who loves where he well knows he is not loved; that is the best of all loving. St Paul, We know right well that all things work together for good to them that love God. And Christ said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, God's kingdom is theirs.

They tell of various kinds of poverty of spirit. There are four. What he refers to here is the first poverty of spirit the soul knows when, illumined by the spirit of truth, things that are not God weigh with her not a jot; as St Paul tells us, 'All things are as dung to me.' In this indigence she finds all creatures irksome.

In the second poverty she considers the merit of her exemplar Christ and her own demerits and finds her own works worthless, though they be the sum of men's achievements. Hence she laments her in the Book of Love, crying, 'The form of my beloved passed me by and I cannot follow him.' To this passing she is self-condemned, following the spoor of her quarry, Christ. So sweet his scent, she swoons away into forgetfulness of outward pain. As St Augustine says, The soul is where she loves rather than where she is giving life, and St Peter tells us that our dwelling is in heaven.

The third poverty of spirit is that of the soul wherein her own nature is slain; her own natural life is stone dead and there is living in her nothing but the spirit of God. As St Paul declares, 'I am dead nevertheless I live; yet my life Christ liveth in me.' In this spiritual death she is grown poor, for all she has to leave or give has been taken from her; moreover she is poor of her free will, for he is doing with it what he will.

The fourth poverty is the incomprehensibility of God in her mind, her inability to compass him whether with knowledge or with works. But the deeper she gets the more the incompre-

hensible splendour of the Deity is reflected in her poverty. For as far as with her inner man she has gotten intuition of divinity so far she follows with her outer man the willing poverty of her pattern Jesus Christ ; or in other words, the power of God having deprived her of all selfhood, she uses all creatures as she needs them, always without attachment, and if she has them not she can do as well without them and with the same detachment. She knows of nothing more that she can do but she rejoices in his incomprehensible truth and that created things are all as naught to him and that his love has taken to itself her naught which is cleaving to him like a tiny spark. It was this poverty St Paul was in the time that he declared ' he heard in God unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter.' On that occasion he was knit to God so that neither life nor death could separate him from his love. Thus it befalls the perfectly lost soul in God, lost, not to creatures merely but to herself as well and aware of nothing but the pure unclouded radiance of God's essence. Behold her lost in him, her heavenly joy, and all incapable of any real wrong-doing. The saints invariably say that nothing whatever can disturb the fixity they have in God. Real sin is any disobedience to the law of divine love, any departure from the life of Jesus Christ. He is the form and essence of all things. What then is real virtue ? Anything wrought in the soul by divine love alone, for that effects naught but its like.

Such is the doctrine of spiritual poverty. Into this true poverty lead us, O superfull goodness of God. Amen.

XI [1]

1

We read in the gospel that our Lord fed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes. The first loaf was, the duty of knowing ourselves : what we have always been to God and what we are now in relation to God. The second was, the duty of compassion towards our evenchristian in his blindness ; his misfortune ought to touch us wellnigh as keenly as our own. The third was, that it behoves us to study the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and copy it exactly so far as that is possible. The fourth, that it behoves us to recognise the justness of God. All accounts of hell-torment are true. St Dionysius has explained that absence from God is hell and God's presence is heaven. The fifth is, that it is for us to have intuition of the deity flowing into the Father and filling him with power and flowing into the Son filling him with wisdom,

[1] See also Spamer's *Texte*, B. 4.

they being one in nature. Christ himself declared, 'Where I am there my Father is and where my Father is there I am.' And they flow into the Holy Ghost filling him with goodwill. As Christ said, 'I and my Father have one Spirit'; and the Holy Ghost flows into the soul.

The soul by nature has received two powers. One power is understanding which can conceive the Holy Trinity and all its works, enclosing it, as one would fill and close a cask. The full cask comprehends its contents: it is in union with what it comprehends, what it is full of. And so is understanding in union with what it understands, what it conceives. It is one therewith by grace as the Son is one with the Father by nature.

The second power is will. It is the nobler in that by nature it can reach to the unknown, God namely. Will seizes God above knowledge, and in grasping what he wills the impress of the unknown God is sealed and stamped into the will so that the will contains God and becomes one with God, and will brings memory and all the soul-powers in its train, therefore the soul is one with God by grace as the Holy Ghost is one with the Father and the Son by nature. She is really in God more than in her own person. As St Augustine says, 'The soul is where she loves rather than where she is giving life.' To rest in this union were better than to do all the works of all creatures, for so her higher power absorbs her lower ones and the soul can do nothing but divine work. But since this may not be, therefore the highest power, seeing her stability in God, communicates it to the lower ones so that they may discern good and evil. In this union Adam dwelt, and while the union lasted he had all the power of creatures (*i.e.* all creatures *in posse*) in his highest power. When a lodestone spends its force upon a needle and attracts it to itself, the needle gets sufficient power to pass on to the needles underneath, which it raises and attaches to the lodestone. Part the top needle and all the rest drop off. It was like this with Adam: when his highest power parted from God, down fell all his powers. Creatures are disjoined through failing to agree among themselves, one wanting one thing, one another. The powers decay through creatures right down to the lowest. The power of gold, for example, cannot give gold but gives silver, and this degradation goes on in silver, from which we get iron. Even so man's powers peter out to nothing. This accounts for the various creatures.

But now all creatures which came forth from God must strive with all their powers to make one man who shall return into the union wherein Adam was before he fell and who shall raise all creatures up again into the selfsame power wherein they were, in human nature. This is accomplished in Christ, as he himself

declared, 'When I am lifted up I will draw all men to me.' He meant that when he was risen in our mind he would recollect us to himself. In this sense all creatures are one man and that man is God. Human nature has not ever been as such. God is from himself eternally and the Father made all things from nothing. That he is in himself he is by his own nature, which is free from becoming and becomes not any thing, and all things' becoming ends in not-becoming. The Son is the same as the Father except that he receives from the Father all that he has and of all becoming he is the form. Withal he is one in the not-becoming. The Holy Ghost is the tie between the Father and the Son and is one with them in the not-becoming; he is the author and agent of becoming in eternity and in time. This temporal becoming ends in eternal not-becoming, and the eternal not-becoming is the work of the eternal nature and has neither end nor beginning.

God is his own form and matter; his form emerges from his matter and according to this form does he form all things that become. But his simple nature is in form formless, in mode modeless, cause uncaused, being without becoming which transcends all things becoming and all that becomes comes to an end therein.

God is eternal and all things have been in him eternally. They were not in themselves. Ere God created creatures he was nothing whatever to creatures, in their understanding, though in himself he was to them eternally the same as he is now and always shall be. No Creature could say God what time itself was not. What minds ignore they count for naught. Creature did not know God when she herself was not, therefore she could not speak him. This is denied by heretics who state that Christ brought human nature with him out of heaven, but that is not true. He got his manhood from our Lady Saint Mary, withal abiding as before in the Godhead; and the Almighty knew in his eternal wisdom the ordering of all things, to wit, the Holy Ghost. This Trinity poured forth into time into the naught of human nature. Thenceforward human nature was changeable in time and God donned human nature. In him human nature was God and human nature knew it with the three powers she has gotten from the blessed Trinity and gave God thanks therefor and loved him with infinite love. By this God sets such store that he loves human nature back with a love so great, any man who knows it possesses heaven incarnate. I charge you, my brothers and my sisters, that ye wax in knowledge and give thanks to God while ye are still in time for having made you from naught aught, and unite yourselves with his divine nature. Once out of time and your chance is gone. But if so be ye cannot apprehend God's nature then believe in Christ and

follow his example steadfastly; Jews, heathens, evil Christians, all who fail to exercise their God-consciousness, are lost, barring infants not arrived at knowledge of themselves and who are properly baptized into his name: in the enjoyment of Christ's name they are holding fast the knowledge wherewith he knows the Father eternally.

Rejoice, all ye powers of my soul, at being joined to God so that none can part you. But I can neither glorify God nor love him to the full therein; so, dying to the virtues I plunge me in the naught of the naked Godhead where, sinking eternally from naught to aught I pass with naught to aught.

Though I should live here in the flesh until the judgment day bearing the pangs of hell it would be small matter by reason of my Lord Jesus Christ, since I have received from him the certainty of never being parted from him. While I am here he is in me: after this life I am in him. All things are possible to me united as I am with him to whom all things are possible. Before that I was at a loss to know if we are God by nature or by grace. Then came Jesus with the light of his own nature and then I spied my memory under my understanding issuing from the essence of my soul and my understanding flowing out of memory and will out of them both. Essence is revealed by the powers and the powers by their works. What my knowledge gave me that I loved; what I did not know I could not love, and to will all things were possible. At one time I was sore perplexed as to whether we are God by nature or by grace. Fear led me to Christ who in truth knows the answer. He gave me light of grace whereby I saw in the divine nature three Persons, his Father being the begetter of all things. According to the words of St James, 'Every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights.' The Father is the light itself, self-luminous in Person and in essence. In the unborn essence he is essential, essence without personality: essence self-manifest as impersonal being. The Father is that same being essentially. In the essence the Father loses his fatherhood completely; nor is he Father there at all. The Father's knowledge of himself in himself, essential and personal, he draws from his unborn essence through the exalted root of his personality. So far as he takes in his unborn essence he is paternal, Father essentially. This exalted light has been for ever flowing in his heart and it is flowing out of him into his Son, as essence and as Person, and it is flowing from them both into their Holy Ghost, in essence and in Person, and these three shed one light essential and personal. The Father sheds on both the light of his essence and his Person; and the Father and the Son shed on the Holy Ghost the light of both essence and Person. The unborn essence being

the oneness of the three Persons and the born essence is God as begetter so far as it flows into the Persons and so far as it emanates with the Persons. Not that the essence begets ; essence begets not. The Son and the Holy Ghost are twin lights of the God-bearing essence in the paternal source where the Father is drawing his born being out of his unborn essence. The Father knows himself with his Son, perceiving himself in himself. For this the Son is the light ; and he wills himself in himself and for this the Holy Ghost is the light. Father and Son have one will and that is the Holy Ghost : it graces the soul, this divine nature, and so suffuses the powers of the soul that the soul can do nothing except divine work. Just as a spring in its bed at the roots of the flowers gives them itself and the flowers grow verdant and coloured on the spring water, so deity giving itself to the powers of the soul makes them grow in the likeness of God. His image appears in her powers, his likeness in her virtues. The more divine nature the soul receives the liker she grows to the nature of God and the closer becomes her union with God. Her union may become so strait that God on a sudden absorbs her in himself and that without remainder whether vice or virtue, nor can the soul distinguish aught that might be taken for herself. God takes her for a creature. Be not deluded by the light of nature. To a soul on the ascent to higher knowledge in the light of grace, dimmer and dimmer glows the light of nature. If she would know the very truth itself she must make certain whether she is detached from things ; whether she is dead to self ; whether she loves God with his own love and without self-intent and has nothing to hold her back and keep her from him ; and whether God alone is alive in her. If so then she has lost herself as Mary lost Christ. Three days she sought him knowing all the while that she would find him. And Christ, meanwhile, was at his Father's school of higher learning all unheeding of his mother's quest. The noble soul which goes to school in God learns to know what God is in the Godhead and what God is in the Trinity and what God is in humanity and gets to know his will.

God in the Godhead is spiritual substance, so elemental that we can say nothing about it excepting that it is naught. To say it is aught were more lying than true. God in the Trinity is the living light in its radiant splendour, a complex of one nature with distinct Persons. The (light) that is life is not this light. Though one might predicate three natures to these (Persons or) distinctions there is but one nature to their union for they all act together exactly like one, working all at once in all creatures. According to St Augustine, the precision (or justice) of God in the Godhead, in the Trinity and in all creatures is the chief delight there is in heaven.

God in human nature is a lamp of living light and this light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends not this light. Darkness ever flees from light as night does from the day. Thence comes her knowledge of God's will. Now St Paul says, 'It is God's will that we be sanctified.' And our sanctification lies in this, in knowing what we were before time, what we are in time and what we shall be after time. Lost during these three days, soul pays no heed to body till it joins her in the temple and is subject to her without murmuring.

The Trinity is the heart of divine and human nature and human nature flows into the Trinity in a steady stream of love. Supposing the soul crosses over, then she sinks down and down in the abysm of the Godhead nor ever finds a footing unless it be that she has taken with her some temporal thing: resting on temporal things brings her back into the Trinity. Things fashioned in time have a ground of their own whereon they can rest; they light on no ground in the Godhead. By this same token the soul knows that she is creature, for all she has she has received in time from the three Persons. She flows out and in in the three Persons. The reason why Christ's soul did never plumb the deeps of Godhead is that she too is creature made in time. God is indeed the matter of the soul, of her energies but not of her creation. Her energies are eternal because he is eternal. This matter never fails her. When fire lacks fuel it goes back to its own land. So would the soul come to naught were her matter to fail. When all her work is done she with her powers remains in God her matter; she casts herself in her impartible essence into the passive, immaterial Godhead; that is her native land. Then the Godhead is to her all things in a single passive power, and she withal all things to it, just as the heart of the sea gives forth in the bowels of the earth the waters which circulate back to the heart of the sea on the face of the earth. Suppose one dropped a millstone from the sun to earth, the earth being pierced straight through the centre, the millstone would stop falling at the centre of the earth. Here is the heart of the earth, the stopping-place of everything on earth. So is the Trinity the stopping-place of creatures as a whole, all the Godhead has being gotten impartible and eternal from itself. The Father is the manifestation of the Godhead, the Son is the image and countenance of the Father and the Holy Ghost is the light of his countenance and the love of them both: all they have have they gotten eternally from their own selves. But the three Persons stooped in compassion towards human nature and the Son was made man and in this world was more despised than any man on earth, suffering want and pain from creatures himself had made in conjunction with his Father, by whose will he became man.

Christ lived in time down to his death and then, arising from the dead, this most despised of men is seen united with the Godhead in the Person of the Christ who came on earth. Human nature wedded with the divine nature; her eternal portion, fellowship with divine nature in the same Person.

2[1]

This is God's good will, that we should know ourselves and that we should know God, and our salvation lies in putting our knowledge into practice and loving in God all that we know. He who knows God in very truth is bound to love and will nothing but what God loves and wills. As St Paul says, 'I do good and doing naught but good to me all things are possible. Many a thing is lawful for me which I do not lest I sin.' Our Lord commands us to be without sin. To whom all things are possible it is also possible to keep this commandment.

The saints declare that all things are in God as they have been in God eternally; not that we were in God in the gross nature we have here: we were in God eternalwise, like art in the artist. God saw himself and saw all things. God was not therefore manifold as things are here in separation. Though creatures here are manifold they are but one idea in God. God in himself is just the *one alone*. When creature goes back to her first cause she knows God simply as one in form and essence and threefold in operation. What intellect knows is knowledge and knowledge stops at what is known, with what is known becoming one. Into the simple idea no knowledge ever entered, for this impartible exemplar after which God created all creatures towers God-high above creatures. Creature in pursuing God to his eternal heights must mount above all creatures, nay, beyond her very self, her own wont and uses, and follow agnosia into the desolate Godhead. St Dionysius says, 'God's desert is God's simple nature.' A creature's desert is her simple nature. In the desert of herself she is robbed of her own form and in God's desert, leading out of hers, she is bereft of name; there she is no more called soul, she is called God with God.

Peradventure ye will say, 'Being in this exalted state why does the soul not raise the body above necessity of earthly things?' To which I answer, at this stage the soul has a body of perfection which uses all things to the glory of God, there being now betwixt God and the soul no barrier nor hindrance. So far as the soul has followed God into the desert of his Godhead so far the body follows Christ into his desert of willing poverty and is one with

[1] See also Jostes, No. 37; Greith, p. 195 *et seq.*; and Büttner, vol. i, No. 17.

God. Well may the Father say, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: follow ye him.' All creatures are with God: the being that they have God gives them with his presence. Saith the bride in the Book of Love, 'I have run round the circle and have found no end to it, so I cast myself into the centre.'

This circle which the loving soul ran round is all the Trinity has ever wrought.

Why is the work of the Trinity called a circle? Because the three Persons have wrought their own likeness in all creatures which are rational. The Trinity is the origin of all things and all things return into their origin. This is the circle the soul runs. When does she run in this circle? She does so when she muses: All this that he has made he could make again a thousand times if he were so minded. So she goes round in endless chain. The least of all his creatures she can find no end to nor can she approfound its worth. Spent with her quest she casts herself into the centre. This point is the power of the Trinity wherein unmoved it is doing all its work. Therein the soul becomes omnipotent.

The three Persons are one omnipotence. This is the motionless point and the unity of the Trinity. The circumference is the incomprehensible work of the three Persons. The point is fixed. The union of the Persons is the essence of the point. In this point God runs through change without otherness, involving into unity of essence, and the soul as one with this fixed point is capable of all things. But her powers, wherein she imitates the Trinity, with them she cannot apprehend its unity. The work of the Trinity has proved the undoing of many Paris theologians: engrossed in the working of the Trinity they have never gotten at their unity. The centre is equally near to all ends, like time in all lands. *Now* is the time here and *now* is the same time in Rome.

Saith the bride in the Book of Love, 'He has wounded me with a glance of his eye.' This refers to the unitive force which streams down from the point, isolating the soul from creatures and changing things and gathering her up again into the point therewith to be united and therein to be eternally established.

One is conscious of this glance within the confines of the soul when she is quite unoccupied, innocent of the practice whether of vice or virtue. During this quiet state intuitive perception is most vivid, so it is then he stabs her with his glance to make her really feel how he has known and loved her while she herself was not. This serves as a piercing reminder to the soul to go out of herself. Whom this glance wounds not is not nor ever has been wounded by love. [Concerning it St Bernard says, 'To him whose spirit has felt this glance it is unutterable; to him who knows it

not it is incredible.' 'Tis an arrow shot without anger and felt without pain. Thence starts the clear and limpid stream of healing grace which enlightens the inner eye to perceive in blissful beholding the delight of the divine affliction wherein we share unheard of spiritual graces, favours untold, not preached nor written down in any book.]

(Saith the soul), 'Lord, thou thyself declarest that thou hast made me like thyself. That passes the ingenuity of man, for no philosopher is sage enough to fabricate the double of himself. Lord,' she cries, 'if thou hast made me like to thee, grant me to see thee seized of the power wherein thou hast created me, to know thee in the wisdom wherein thou hast known me, to conceive thee as thou conceivest me; and grant me Lord that by thy grace I be made one with thee in nature as thy Son is one with thy nature eternally, and that thy grace may be my nature; for, Lord, thy grace becomes thy nature and in thy nature we become God, as the Father in his nature is God by nature.'

Christ exhorts us to be perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect in his nature. He says, 'God is more near to you than ye are to yourselves.' And in the same sense St Augustine says the soul has private entry to the divine nature, where things for her all come to naught. Then she is ignorant with knowing, loveless with loving, dark with enlightenment. Then to know God would be an imperfection; to know herself in God would be an imperfection or to know God in her would be an imperfection. The incomprehensible essence she absorbs above all knowledge by grace, as the Father does by nature; and the born essence being gotten in her understanding as the Father has gotten it in him, she steals out of herself and pierces the naked essence there to retain no more of things than when she issued forth from God. She comes so utterly to naught that there is nothing left but God; God outshines her as the sun the moon, and she in God's own subtile nature flows into all that God is flowing in eternally.

If thou hast apprehended me, there are two points to notice in these words. First, the soul knowing she was made from naught desires to see who made her. And secondly, her words, 'Grant me to see thee as creating me,' mean that she wants to feel the faith and love wherein she was created. For then the soul sees God though she does not see through him. She knows God although she cannot fathom him; she apprehends God but cannot comprehend him as he comprehends himself. St Paul says, 'Then we shall know as we are known.' Stripped of her own being, with God her only being, the soul sees God with God, knows and conceives God with God. One high authority declares that the soul sees, knows, apprehends God with his very own essence which is

the very essence of the soul. The soul sees, knows, conceives God as she is herself conceived in the pure intellect of the Deity. Then soul is comprehender as well as comprehended. But no man in this body and after the mode of his own mind can understand how soul is both conceiver and conceived be he not wholly sunk into himself, into pure knowledge of his own God-nature where no created thought did ever enter.

Now mark. The naught whereby soul comes to naught is the turning from images and forms to stay at none of them, for the divine nature is neither form nor image. And soul divorced from images and forms is like to the formless nature of God. This is the secret passage of the soul into divine nature. The soul which has nowhere to turn is ready to turn to the image of God. In other words, she goes with naught to naught: to the divine nature whereto none may attain be he not stripped of all mental matter. Alas! how sorely they obstruct this secret passage, those who so lightly stay at temporal things! Dionysius exhorted his disciples in this sense, saying, 'Wouldst know the hidden mystery of God? then transcend whatever hinders thy pure perception, whatever thou canst grasp with thy understanding. God has nothing so hid as to be beyond the ken of a soul that has the wit to seek it right diligently and with prudence.'

A hard saying this, there is nothing in him so hidden as to be beyond her ken. Yet mark these facts.

The power of things resides in essence. Now the soul is capable of knowing all things in her highest power, she being all closeted in her secret chamber. To the soul thus freed from things there is disclosed his secret essence. She is able to receive his arcane power. As St Paul says, 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.' Up, noble soul! seek thee no other place than this unnecessitous naught that did create thee, the same in its immovableness shall be thy place; there shalt thou be more motionless than naught.—But this is traversed by some learned men who hold it is impossible. Naught, say they, is motionless, so how can the soul be more motionless than naught? The soul is a created aught which can be moved: she is a variable; naught is a constant. The soul, for instance, goes from light to light until she finds the sovran truth where all things end. So too the soul is moved in that she is aware of things other than herself. Naught has no awareness. Therefore aught is more movable than naught. So runs the argument against our thesis. Now to prove that the soul is more motionless than naught.

The arch-good, God, is more motionless than naught. And the most perfect likeness of this motionless arch-good is also most immovable. Haply thou wilt object: Naught is the same as

God for both of them are non-existent. Not so. For naught is nothing to itself or any creature. But God is to himself his aught and naught to the mind of any creature. Withal the creature aught tells forth God's aught by nature rather than its own. God's aught is intellectual being. Dionysius says, 'The intellectual light that God is, gat its own image in the rational soul.' Now if God is more motionless than naught, it follows that the soul as reflected into her motionless aught, God namely, is more motionless than naught. Naught is movable out of itself when naught becomes aught and always is moved when aught is produced out of naught. Not so the soul: she always is aught and can never be naught. Behold the soul more motionless than naught, God having set her free, free to assert her own free will.

Her motion is the quest of him who has never loved nor was ever loved. Which may be interpreted thus. The soul, uplifting with all her might and main herself above herself to love the sovran good, sees clearly she can never reach the divine aught accompanied by any of her powers. So down she goes again into herself, and the motionless aught bides unbeloved of her and of all that is not its very self. Thus the divine aught is never loved by her nor by anything that is not itself, nor has it ever loved. You can put it like this. He loves nothing but himself or his image in all things. But since he is not love nor anything named, therefore he loves not neither is he loved. This is the meaning of St Dionysius' words, 'God dwells in motionless calm.' And the bride says in the Book of Love, 'I have crossed all the mountains, aye, even my own powers, and have reached the dark power of the Father. There heard I without sound, there saw I without light, there breathed I without motion; there did I taste what savoured not, there did I touch what touched not back. Then my heart was bottomless, my soul loveless, my mind formless and my nature natureless.'

Now what does the soul mean by 'crossing all the mountains?' She means she has transcended her own rational powers and gotten 'to the dark power of the Father' where all rational distinctions end. 'There heard I without sound.' Hearing without sound means intuition, direct apprehension. 'There saw I without light.' Seeing without light means undefined, vague perception in the naught. 'There breathed I without stir': the inspiration of unity wherein all things are still. 'There tasted I what savoured not': over all sensible things hangs the motionless haze of unity. 'There did I touch what touched not back': alien, unalloyed essence of all creatures: the substance of all things substantial. 'Then my heart was bottomless': the overwhelming wonder of

my powers. 'And my soul loveless': powers and senses blotted out. 'And my spirit formless': the sealing of the mind in the unformed form and image of God. 'And my nature natureless': my own nature withered away till nothing is left but the one unique *is*. This is-ness is the unity, the being of itself and of all things. St Dionysius says, 'The one alone is the life of lives, being of beings, reason of reasons, nature of natures, light of lights and yet not light, not life, not nature.' Of it St James declares, 'The most perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights.' Again St Dionysius says, 'The First Cause is above all names and transcends love; it is superessential, superintelligible, super-rational and supernatural. The First Cause is neither light nor darkness.' Behold how different from all caused things.

Saith the soul in the Book of Love, 'No one is God to me and I am soul to none.' By 'no one is God to me' she means merely that no entity, nothing nameable, is her God. Again the words, 'I am soul to none' mean that she is so void of self she has not got it in her to be aught to anyone. This is the state in which the soul should be: in utter destitution. The soul cries in the Book of Love, 'He is mine and I am his.' It were better she had said, 'He is not mine nor am I his,' for God who is in all is therein all his own. She can lay claim to naught: she has lost every whit whereto any wight could in anywise be aught or she withal be aught to any wight. No one is her God and she is no one's soul, wherefore she cries in the Book of Love, 'Fly from me, beloved, on the feathers of the wind.'

What is the meaning of these feathers of the wind whereon the soul rides? The feathers are the choirs of Seraphim. The wind of their feathers is their clear seraphic knowledge. Above this dwells the soul. But not till she has left behind all images and forms, not harbouring any, not resting upon any. She must have lost her individual motion. And thus divested of her creature-hood, having no hold on anything at all, she sinks into downright nothingness; there she is concealed from every creature. To this same naught no Seraph's understanding can attain; in this naught dwells the soul, super-seraphic, above all such knowing. Thus the soul rides on the feathers of the wind.

But what a perfect life this man must lead! How dead his soul to every kind of motion! St John declares, 'Blessed are the dead that die in God.' To this end, O man, do thou free thyself from every sort of sensible affection. God is exempt from such, and it behoves thee, man, to be the same if thou wouldst solve his hidden mystery. For this, look you, soul must be stripped of all her senses. St Dionysius spoke of this to Timothy, one of his disciples, when talk arose about St Paul who had been put to death.

'Alas! my friend' (said Timothy), 'and shall we never hear again the loved voice of our master?' The saint replied, 'Friend Timothy, my counsel is to leave behind us corporal things and go to God. But this we cannot do save with blind eyes and alien senses; not that we ought to have misleading senses: we must transcend sense and knowledge to get to his mysterious unity.' Anent which St Augustine says, 'The soul has a private door into divinity where for her all things amount to naught.' There she is ignorant with knowing, will-less with willing, dark with enlightenment. To wot of self would mean her imperfection; to wot of God would mean her imperfection; to wot of self in God or God in her would mean her imperfection: self is reduced to utter naught and there is nothing left but God, for God outshines her as the sun the moon and she with God's all-penetrativeness streams into the eternal Godhead where God keeps ever flowing into God.

Nothing is without beginning, and since nothing is without beginning God could make us from nothing better than nothing, like himself. Alone God's power did make the soul, so she like him is free from matter. And soul could have no homelier road into divinity than by way of nothing to nothing, for nothing unites like natural affinity. But St John Chrysostom declares that none can take it till his outward and his inward senses are focussed to clear vision of the Deity.

The naught we were before we were created was indigent of naught. Moreover of itself it could do absolutely naught and naught withstood creatures: all but the power of God; it was this caused naught to stir when God made all things from naught. Now we have got to be more motionless than naught.—'But how?' Mark how. God gat the soul the mistress of herself, not overriding her free will nor once exacting from her aught that she will not; so whatever in this body she elects of her free will she is free to carry through. Say she chooses to need nothing and to be more motionless than naught, then assembling all her powers into her free will so as not to be hindered by herself or any thing, she centres herself in the motionless God who was n'er moved by any act done by the blessed Trinity nor is not indigent of any thing the blessed Trinity has ever wrought. To reach this point of needing naught and being more immutable than naught, soul must be sunk so deep in the bottomless well of the divine naught that nothing can draw her thereout to spend herself on mortal things, but there she steadfastly abides; as the heavenly Father is ever-abiding in his nature without let or hindrance so the soul abides therein without let or hindrance, as far as that is possible to creature.

—'Pray, Sir, how should it be impossible seeing that the soul was created to that end?'—Because, you see, if she does stoop to baser things to let herself be satisfied with these, then that which is above her is beyond her reach, whereas God keeps no secrets from the soul whose lofty nature is equal to the quest. Up, noble Soul! Out of thyself so far thou never comest in again and enter into God so deep thou never comest out again: there stay nor ever deign to stoop to creature; and burden not thyself with things made clear to thee, nor wander among objects presented to thy mind, nor be not hindered from achievement by any service. Steadfastly pursue thy simple nature and the unnecessitous nothingness, seeking no other place than this unnecessitous naught. God who made thee out of nothing, he in his unnecessitous nothingness and immovableness shall himself be thy place. There thou shalt be more immovable than nothing.

3

They that serve God for gain with outward works reap their reward in creatures, such as heaven and heavenly things. But they that serve God by interior acts are rewarded with the uncreated, namely, the works of the blessed Trinity.

Mark this. No fire no light, no earth no life, no air no love, no water no place. Ergo, God is not light nor life nor love nor nature nor spirit nor semblance nor anything we can put into words. God flows into God and God flows out of God and God knows himself God in himself and knows himself God in his creatures in general and he knows himself God in the noble soul in particular. The Father is almighty in the soul, the Son all-wise, the Holy Ghost all-loving, loving all creatures with the same love. But he manifests as *different* and the soul is destined to know things as they are and conceive things as they are when, seized thereof, she plunges into the bottomless well of the divine nature and becomes so one with God that she herself would say that she is God. The soul withdrawn into herself till nothing made or named takes shape in her and she is bare as God of any name, gathers herself up above herself into her God and takes herself cum God for God. God is not black nor white, nor large nor small, he has no place nor any past nor future time, and the soul is like him only in so far as she can project herself above all creatures.

The soul is a creature receptive to everything named, but the nameless she cannot receive until she is gotten so deep into God that she is nameless herself. And then none can tell if it is she that has gotten God or God has gotten her. Dionysius says,

'God has conceived himself in her, so utterly absorbing her that she is now no longer self but God.' And the soul's inferior powers have distinction of person, love uniting the persons not the essence. The soul is destined to this knowledge when, on the ebb-tide of God's glory, she is borne back into the bottomless ground of the fount whence she flowed forth and finds she is not from herself.

The highest boon, the chief good of the soul, is not from herself. Christ himself declared he was not from himself. The truest thing we have is our intuition of not being from ourselves and that we ourselves are not of ourselves.

God has done all things for himself and he has made the soul like to himself, over all things, under all things, in all things, out of all things and withal abiding in herself impartibly. But she is noblest keeping to the desert wherein she is naught and there is nothing doing. St Dionysius prays, 'Lord, lead me into the desert where thou art formless that in thy solitude I may lose all form.' The soul is in all things in her subtile nature wherein she inhabits all things without affecting them or being affected by them. Thus transcending things she cries, 'Lord, fetch me into thy Godhead where thou art naught, for what is aught I deem to be not God.' The soul is over all things in her freedom; she knows none can compel her, not even God himself. Surrendering her free will to God she plunges into her own emptiness, beseeching, 'Lord, take me into the gloom of thy Godhead that in thy dark I may lose all my light, for nothing that can be revealed do I account as light.' She is out of all things in her power of understanding, which makes her so elastic she is able to hold God as well as all his creatures. Embodying God thus she is more God than her own self. This is hers by grace. Aught of God is God entire and aught of him holds his whole being. This he is in the lowliest as much as in the loftiest nature. A small bung stops the barrel no less well than the biggest.

Comprehension belongs to his paternal power. He grasps himself in himself in all creatures and grasps himself in his countenance whereto he admits no creature and whereinto no creature can get. And this comprehension he veils in a cloud of distortion so that no creature can grasp him as he grasps himself. What the soul grasps in the light she loses in the darkness. Yet she makes for the cloud, deeming his darkness better than her light. There she suddenly loses her light and herself in his darkness.

The soul cries in the Book of Love, 'No one is my God and I am no one's soul, and nothing manifest to me do I take for God. I flee from God for God's sake.' St John says, 'God is love.' But theologians argue that if he means the love wherewith the soul loves

God, this is not true. Were that love God, wherewith the soul can love, it would not fail her as it does. This is a natural love, the virtue. But suppose her will is turned toward God, then God draws love from nothing and pours it into the virtue, so her love is both nature and grace. In grace God gives himself to the soul and the Holy Ghost unites with her love, and the love which is the Holy Ghost is God, and the love which is grace is the nature which unites the soul with God, and in this union the soul is absorbed into God and loves God with his own love in God, which in herself she cannot do.

The Father is the revelation of all things and the Son is the image of all things and the Holy Ghost is the fulfilling of that order. Philosophers say that things in contact with God are not God but his works. The soul is self-motive before she is moved and her being moved is the work of God, the soul being the agent while the work itself is creature. The power which perfects the soul, which sweeps her out of herself without her aid or abetting, is God. I can touch the minster, not carry it off. That we attribute to God matter and form and work is due to our gross senses. Theologians tell of the light which gives no light, which has no form nor matter and is yet a creature. To know God as he is we must be absolutely free from knowledge. Thus St Augustine says, ' Lord, I know not what I love in thee if it be not light.' As God is timeless and modeless so he is also nameless. St Paul says, ' There be many that run but one receiveth the prize.' All the soul-powers run but pure nature alone receives the crown, for, according to Dionysius, this race is nothing else than the flight from creatures to unite with their creator. Atoned with her creator the soul has lost her name for she herself does not exist: God has absorbed her into him just as the sunlight swallows up the dawn till it is gone.

Tell me, where is the soul's abode ?—Upon the pinions of the wind. The pinions are the powers of divine nature. The wind is the waging of the powers of the soul's divine nature. When he thrusts her sins under her eyes she sinks down into him like a fish in the sea. All creatures lose their names on entering human nature. Hence Christ's exhortation, ' Preach the gospel to all creatures.' He meant only human beings.

Observe when a man is all creatures. When he has the power of them all. When a man, knowing with his outward senses all corporal things, detaches himself from them and abides therein without attachment; when, knowing with his interior senses all spiritual things, he detaches himself from these and abides therein without attachment, then at length that man is all creatures; then, not till then, that man has come to his own nature and is

ready to go into God. If we fail to find God it is because we seek in semblance what has no resemblance. The scriptures tell us more of his unlikeness than his likeness. Origen says the soul's quest of God comes by self-observation. If she knew herself she would know God also. If she pictures herself or pictures her God that comes of over-defining. On merging into the Godhead all definition is lost.

Dionysius says to Timothy, 'Friend Timothy, if thou dost view the spirit of truth, pursue it not with mortal senses. It is so swift, it comes rushing.' God must be sought in estrangement, forgetfulness and non-sense; for the Godhead has in it all things *in posse* without the least likeness to anything. The supremely pure splendour of the impartible essence illumines all things at once. According to Dionysius, beauty is order: symmetry with supreme lucidity. In this sense the Godhead is the beauty of the three Persons. And it behoves the soul to order her lower powers to her higher and her higher ones to God; the outer senses to the inner and the inner ones to reason; thought servant to intelligence, intelligence to will and her will to their unity, then the soul will be a unity with nothing flowing into her except pure deity as it is proceeding from itself. Concerning this St Dionysius says the soul has flung her faculties into her pure being and only her chief power remains at work. And one doctor says that when the chief power takes command the rest all enter into it losing their own activities, so now behold the soul in her proper order and in her pure nature, her pure nature being her exalted light-nature which is potentially all things.

The Godhead flows into the Father, into the Son and the Holy Ghost, into itself in eternity and in time into creatures. It gives to each as much as it can hold: to stones existence, to the trees their growth, to birds their flight, to beasts their pleasures, to the angels reason and to man free nature. God was made man and took upon himself by grace the nature of all things in time even as in eternity he has them all by nature. St Paul says, 'Christ is to me all things.' One Person with two natures. Each seems all things to each. It is a play of the light and reflection of his own nature. God's being is first being, flowing being, fixed being, initial being and final being.

From essence in general emanates power and work. The three Persons are in this respect the storehouse of divinity, and the three Persons descend into the essence of the soul by grace, and the Persons bring divine nature into the soul in their train, one nature coursing through the other. The higher powers of the soul flow out of the essence of the soul as the three Persons issue from the Godhead. And when God pours his grace into the soul he pours

it into the essence of the soul, for into the essence of the soul no fleck can fall let her powers do what they may. The higher powers of the soul draw their seeming from the essence of grace in the essence of the soul, and her chief power transcends the lower ones in nature.

Mind big with the conception of God's nature is the corollary of Christ's Person in human nature. When the soul is absorbed into God's nature her sins and shortcomings are stripped off and she becomes God, divine in nature ; she enjoys divine nature in herself just as the Father does in him. She gets it not from her own nature : she takes divine nature from God into her nature. She receives perfection and power. Hence the words of St Paul, 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.' Wisdom springs up in understanding ; it begins in understanding and ends in desire and has neither heart nor thought. As St Dionysius says, 'When the soul, finding this outlet, has a footing in eternity and in time in her own understanding, therein she shall return into the flow where God is flowing back into himself, and does not flow away.'

God is flowing back into himself, recking no more of creatures than he did when they were not. And the soul shall do the same. She shall with her humanity conceive the Person of the Son and with the Person of the Son she shall apprehend the Father and the Holy Ghost in both and them both in the Holy Ghost ; and with the Person of the Father she shall grasp his impartible nature and in his nature discerning the abyss she shall flow into the void bereft of matter and of form. Form, matter, mind and mode she loses in the unity for she herself has come to naught : God is doing all her work, he preserves her in his being and leads her in his power into his naked Godhead. She flows with his deity into all that God is flowing in. She is all things' place and has herself no place. This is the spirit of wisdom which has neither heart nor thought.

Soul flowing in the Deity is so nearly God that in the power of the Father she receives divinity, (she) by grace as the Father does by nature. St Paul says, 'In one image shall we go from glory to glory.' Meaning that we shall receive the impartible Godhead with all that flows therefrom and shall therein conceive the Deity as the Deity conceives itself. Her will and God's will shall be one, and wherever God has gotten himself there she is with God. To this none may attain while in this body except God grant his best gift to the soul, namely, the vision of God which confirms the soul in the Trinity and in the image of the Godhead.

XII

THE DROWNING

Though there be neither hell nor heaven yet will I love God: thee Father and thy sovran nature wherein the Trinity abides in the unity whence it gets its power.—Now you desire to hear about this hidden and exalted nature of the Trinity. The Persons are God in their personality, Godhead by nature in their oneness. But you must know what God and Godhead are. The former has distinctions; which the soul of me explains by the reflection of the exalted unity. This shines in its own essence wholly indiscriminate. Therein is contained its unity entire, including the distinctions of lofty personality. The river is fontal wherein unity abides; the one alone is unnecessitous, poised in itself in sable stillness. Incomprehensible and yet self-evident. Light is the first thing to appear; it beguiles the mind into the unknown without itself, everlasting, in-drawn, plunged in gloom. There it is befooled, there it is bereft of light's darkness, losing them both in the abyss; there that mysterious thing the mind is estranged in the unity which is withal its life.

O unfathomable sink, in thy depth thou art high and in thy height profound!—How so?—That is hidden from us in thy bottomless abysm. St Paul declares that it shall be made known to us. In this gnosis the mind transcends itself; it has been absorbed into the Trinity. There the mind dies all dying in the wonder of the Godhead, for with that unity it is confused; the personal losing its name in sameness. There mind, atoned, is accounted naught; there it loses the means of divinity. Light and darkness, it is rid of both, matter as well as form. The spark thus bare, made naught from its own naught, is swallowed up in its naught's aught. This same naught is poverty in the Persons, which beguiles the mind and reduces it to unity. In the embrace of this sovran one which naughts the separated self of things, being is one without distinction although a thing created in its individual nature. The one I mean is wordless. One and one uniting, void shines into void. Where these two abysms hang, equally spirated, de-spirated, there is the supreme being; where God gives up the ghost, darkness reigns in the unknown known unity. This is hidden from us in his motionless deep. Creatures cannot penetrate this aught.

Well that this aught transcends us.
Even so loving it transcendently,
Plunge in: this is the drowning.

THIS IS THE GLOSS ON THE DROWNING

It is true spiritual perfection to love God for his own sake regardless of hell or heaven. We must love the three Persons in their unity of nature and their one nature in the three Persons. The Trinity has its power in the unity and the unity has its dignity in the Trinity. It belongs, moreover, to the noble mind to perceive the distinction between God and Godhead; how it is the three Persons in him have gotten his unity as their natural being. Each Person has for nature his unity entire, so each of the Persons is in himself God and in his nature Godhead. God is God in the Persons and Godhead in his nature: in his impartible nature. The unity shines forth in the Trinity as articulate speech. But the perfect reflection of the one is shining by itself in lonely silence, there safely pent as one and indivisible. Further, the three Persons in their utterance keep their distinctive properties. The Father is source of the Son and the Son is the river thereof eternally flowing out of the Father as Person, while abiding within him in essence. The Father and the Son give forth their breath (or spirit). Thus the originated river with its original source is the origin of the Holy Ghost. Unity which, logically speaking, is the condition of the original source is also the condition of the river which, together with its source, is source of the Holy Ghost. And as this oneness is the nature of them both so too it is the nature of the breath exhaled by both. This river then is fontal. The unity which is in them both is unnecessitous, it has no need of speech, but subsists alone in unbroken silence. Not that the utterance dies, *i.e.* the spoken essence. But where speech beats into the silence of its nature both have one common character, the character of sameness. What is this? It is the motionless dark that no one knows but he in whom it reigns: the one with its selfhood. First to arise in it is light. Lo, this is the originated river, and origin itself, which has the character of light as proceeding forth in its individual nature. And what here streams forth to view will reveal itself and that from which it springs. In its interior procession this originated river, which is also the origin itself, has the nature of obscure, unmanifest intelligence, but the light proceeding forth brings revelation to the mind, beguiling it out of itself into its mysterious indwelling cause. There it is shorn of light's illusion. Of everything, that is, which has been revealed to it in the form of light. Thereof it is despoiled, but now it finds another and better than this light-like understanding. Light has mode without knowledge. Darkness is knowledge without mode, a thing, that is, we can in nowise have. The mind

is rid of light when it is rid of mode ; and it is rid of darkness when, letting go of all natural things, it sinks in nameless actuality. Then it loses both light and darkness in the abyss that creature in its own right never plumbs. Such is the estrangement in the one as foreshadowed in the ordinary mind, but the realization of unity which the blessed have lies in the exquisite consciousness of another than themselves.

O unfathomable void, bottomless to creatures and to thine own self, in thy depth art thou exalted in thy impartible, imperishable actuality ; in the height of thy essential power thou art so deep thou dost engulf thy simple ground which is there concealed from all that thou art not ; yet those whom thou wouldst commune with shall know thee with thyself. As St Paul declares, ' Then shall we know as we are known.' This knowledge the mind gets not from its individual nature : the unity hales it in the Three into itself, that is, to its true and natural abode where it transcends itself in what inhales it ; where ' the spirit dies all dying in the wonder of the Godhead.' This dying of the spirit means its confusion with the one essential nature though it remains discrete in the Persons of the Trinity. This shows the activity of spirit ; its having variety of Persons. But by their union is shed a single light, for the three Persons are aglow with one intrinsic nature, like three lights with one shine. According to St Augustine this essential light is cast by the Persons into the pure spirit. At its glance the spirit forfeits self and selfhood and the uses of its powers. Such is the effect of the shaft of pure impartible light of unity which this spirit is rather than itself when it is reduced to nothing but the same. We call the unity naught because mind has no notion what it is ; what the mind does know is that it is upheld by another than itself. Its upholder then is aught rather than naught, though mind has no idea what it can be. It is more real to him than his own self in that it belies his personal naught. For mind, as actually dwelling there, loses every means of divine nature, which to him is all things. He loses his individual nature and yet he does not die ; he wins the nature of divinity although not God by nature but by grace. Now remember, he is something created out of naught. Yet he, a mere created wight, is drawn by the power of God's essence into his unity, a thing unknown in anywise to any creature. This unity which is in nowise creaturely is poverty, for it is poor of creatures, its content being that of simple actuality. This modeless creature-essence is the being of the Persons who alone contain it in its most primitive and simple form as their nature. This knowledge de-ments the mind. This spiritual dementia means the absolute modelessness of the unity which the Persons have in actual mode. The spirit broods in

sameness without light or darkness. Sans light, in its impenetrable actuality; sans darkness in its lack of any special name. The spirit free from matter and from form has taken on the form of God. Thus the mind attains to its eternal image which is one in its essential nature and threefold as uttered in the Persons. Though the spirit in this image has an eternal nature of its own yet in itself it is a thing created. This created thing is *mens*; by *mens* being meant the spark, the living principle of spirit. This is the spirit in itself. Its eternal image is another; that is really God. When the spirit in itself turns from all things becoming into the not-becoming of its eternal object in the Persons, whence it comes, then the mind is said to return to its exemplar. Then void shines into void: the purified becomingness of mind turns to the pure not-becoming nature of its eternal idea. In this embrace is consummated that exalted union wherein at length the spirit at one with all its nature is in divine atonement. Where these two meet in one, equally spirit and not-spirit, there is beatitude.

Now consider what the spirit of God means. The most significant and subtile word that creature can employ is spirit (breath or ghost) and that is why we call God spirit. But creature has no proper name for the nameless God and therefore to our mind God is not spirit.

Mark too the meaning of spirituality of soul. It means that, aloof from the coil of nether things, she is living at her summit in thought and love. Here she is one spirit with God. Spirituality of soul, besides, means that in her aught she is no more material than in her naught wherefrom she was created. Such is the spiritual nature of the soul. But she is de-spirited (de-mented) when, at her absorption, she is what is his rather than her own, and this is the perfection of her sanity. The interior spiration of God, again, is his hidden nature, the quarry of the mind which it escapes; for this mysterious and silent one lies hid in depths of stillness that no creature ever plumbs. This being is beyond our grasp, whereat, rejoicing greatly, let us hasten to seize it with itself: this is our highest happiness. So be it, by thy help, O divine Trinity. Amen.

XIII[1]

THE FLOW INTO THE FATHER

Concerning the flow into the Father, note as follows.

The Godhead is contained in the Father as nature, wherefore

[1] See Spamer's *Texte*, B. 2, from which the words in brackets are taken.

he is omnipotent and receives naught from aught that he is not himself in his divine potentiality, seeing that he has it in him in essence, as his own. Nevertheless, speaking of the Father we mean the Person of the Father, and speaking of the Godhead we mean his nature, his impartible substance, that is to say. Now since this nature stays brooding in settled immoveable stillness, moving all things which have proceeded in eternity in the word of his power (or potential Word), it follows that, as power, it has ever been flowing into the Father making him able to beget a Son like unto himself. We can prove it thus. The Persons are impotent as Persons ; anything they do is done in virtue of their nature which is their real being. So much for the flow into the Father which he has of his own nature wherein he is omnipotent.

Now mark. The soul has received two powers by nature. The first of these powers is understanding. This comprehends the Trinity, although it is incomprehensible, and all its works. Observe how understanding comprehends the Trinity, and all its works, despite its being incomprehensible. The soul in her understanding is the image of the Son and the Son is the Father's understanding. So when the soul is empty of her own understanding, and only the Son is her understanding, she understands with the Son the Son and the Father and their common Spirit. That is how the soul comprehends the Trinity and all its works.

Her other power is will. It is its nature to cast itself into the unknown which is God. God is said to be unknown because no creature knows him as he knows himself; as known to himself he is unknowing to all creatures. Hence we call God agnosia. Now the chief power of the soul is too fastidious to dally with temporal, known things, so free will boldly disregards the known and cleaves to what it knows not. As St Paul says, 'I know not; God knoweth.'

Christ says, 'When I am ascended I will draw all things to me.' He means that when he dawns upon our heart and understanding he gathers us up into himself. In this sense all creatures are one man and that man is God. [In this sense man is all things. For he has the nature of all creatures, and souls joined to Christ are in this sense one man with him. He is the head and they are his members, who are in his charity.] In Christ his all was assembled into one. His higher and his lower faculties, and the senses of his outward and his inward man were in harmonious union with his highest power, conceived there by divine conception, which was united with him in one Person. And so with the man in whom all creatures end, in whom all multitudinous things have been reduced to one in Christ : man is then one in God with Christ's humanity. Thus all creatures are one man and that man is God

in Christ's Person. As one master says : With God one spirit and with Christ one body, that is unity indeed.

With the powers received from the Trinity the soul knows the ordering of all things ordained by God in such exalted fashion. But those that turn away their eyes from God relapse into the self-same naught wherein they were before they had received the likeness of the Trinity, this likeness of the Trinity aye informing them of the dark nothing back to which they wend. In this darkness gather all the pangs of hell. The dark enwraps them and hides the sight of God ; it burns them past soothing by their created aught. This is bitter to their conscience which damns them to all time. In this pit of nothingness they sink for evermore, powerless to grasp the naught they were before they had the likeness of the Trinity.

And now, my children, let us examine these dark sayings carefully. You will see the obvious meaning of these damned. But another, ghostly, sense lies hid therein, which it behoves you to note specially. This applies to the elect who turn away their mind from God and flow back into that same naught, for when the soul is carried by her understanding above all things and beyond the scope of her own understanding to the understanding of the sovran good she sees that to all creatures this is unintelligible. So down she goes with her own understanding.

The fastidious soul can rest her understanding on nothing that has name. She escapes from every name into the nameless nothingness. Escaping her own nature she falls clear of her own aught. The naught she falls into is the unknowing, which is called the dark. ' In this dark gather the pangs of hell,' where the soul is plunged sheer into the void. This only happens when she is perfectly devoid of knowledge. The slightest trace of knowledge or understanding of the naught that she is plunged in would be hell-torment to her. All sense and knowledge of the naught ends in this darkness. ' The darkness burns them past salving by any of their kind. Bitter is this conscience which damns them to all time. In this abyss of nothingness they sink for evermore, failing to grasp the naught they were before they took the likeness of the Trinity.' By virtue whereof they have their being. To approfound the naught wherein they drown they are as helpless as they were when they were not. All sense and knowledge end in the darkness of their naught. For this darkness is the incomprehensible nature of God. She sinks for evermore in the depths of this naught. She sinks and drowns ; she drowns to her own aught. Her aught, surviving, sinks as naught to naught. But the naught that sinks can never comprehend the naught it sinks in. Every virtue mastered and transcended, the soul cries ; ' Even

so I cannot glorify and love God to the full. I die then to the virtues casting me into the naught of the Godhead to sink eternally from naught to aught.' The highest meed of love and praise the soul can lavish on the sovran good is given in the knowledge that all her love and praise fall short of God. So down she goes through the little she can call her own and dying to her virtues is cast into the naught of her own self.

Two points mark here. She casts herself with the naught of herself when, self-bereft of her exalted power she ever regards her own insignificance.

The other naught she plunges in is the naught of the Godhead. Seeing that she herself is naught and not disposed to stay at aught, the soul casts herself into the naught of the Godhead and so comes with naught to naught. She wants the aught she recognises in herself to perish in the naught which is its very aught and so subsist in unity. She sees we cannot love and glorify God better than by recognising how inadequate all love and glory are. Wherefore she holds her peace. St Dionysius being bent on lauding Mary's virtues found them so inconceivable he held his tongue. By his dumbness the worthy Dionysius did Mary highest honour. Thus it befalls the soul on being ravished into God's incomprehensibility. Her lips struck dumb, 'O groundless Truth,' she cries, 'how paltry is our praise!' So she attains to union close enough for God to pour himself into her every whit and snatch her every whit into himself, leaving no trace of either vice or virtue; nor does the soul know any difference.

For you must know that to the soul in her perfection goodness would come quite natural; she would not merely practise virtues, but virtue as a whole would be her life and she would radiate it naturally. We seem to be vicious or virtuous from being now the one and now the other. This should not be: we ought to be always in a state of perfection. That is one thing to note.

Further, God absorbs the soul, leaving no trace. This means that the soul ravished by God into the peace and quiet of his secret self makes little show save to her kind. There the soul knows no separation, for he who has absorbed her has merged her in himself. She well knows that she is but knows not what she is.—The sun in certain countries is too hot for fruits to flourish on the surface of earth, but, on the other hand, the sun produces gold in plenty in the bowels of earth. And so with the soul in whom the bright sun of the divine nature shines: it produces its like there, scattering the darkness and bringing about perfect unity. Look you, it behoves us to be very merciful to these, for, withdrawn into his hiding, they are out of touch with the profane.

St Chrysostom says, ' It is not yet manifest what we are, but when we are changed into him we shall show what we are.' Whatever she may take herself for, to God she is creature.

The Godhead is a spiritual substance, so impenetrable that none can say what manner of thing it is. They say: God in the Trinity is the living light in its visible radiance. In other words, the three Persons are but one in nature though distinct in Person in the same sense that the source of light is not the light nor is the source its shine. Applying this to the three Persons, the source is the Father, the Son is the light and the Holy Ghost is the shine. The Father is the living source in whom all things have lived eternally without themselves as in their cause. The light is the Son in whom all things appear eternally as in their idea. The shine is the Holy Ghost in whom all things are one eternally as in their naught. Not that one Person is the life and another the light: the three Persons are one life, one light.

The Trinity is the heart of the divine nature. As you may prove. For in human life it is the heart which beats in all the limbs, energising, co-ordinating them. Because the limbs receive from it, therefore it is called the heart. Now touching the Godhead, this is not active in its nature, but anything it does it does with the Persons, and the Trinity is called the heart of divine nature because this works by means of it, and because it (the Trinity) is the origin of all things and all things flow back into it and end. This heart's heart, again, is the paramount power of the unity wherein and whereby it is omnipotent. Human nature flows in love into the Trinity as into its universal origin. The unity of the Trinity is bottomless and nothing is contained therein. In the embrace of unity the naked soul sinks down for aye nor ever touches bottom. Her temporalities (*i.e.* the created natures of her powers) stop at the Persons, whereas her pure essence is received by the pure unity of God without return.

Behold the soul divorced from every aught. For he who stoops to aught that is not God can never be received into God's unity. This unity is causeless: it is self-caused. Of bottomless depth the floor, of endless height the roof, of boundless space the rim. I refer to the Trinity of Persons: the unity underlies it, holding it together; it overtops it, energising it; it surrounds it, ending its distinctions. Thus the Trinity is in the unity and the unity in the Trinity. As saith the psalm *Quicumque vult.*

That we should know ourselves and God so far as we are able, that is God's will. If we would know ourselves we have to recognise that we are nothing but the raw material of God for the blessed Trinity to work in. It behoves us therefore to be vastly careful not to hamper in any way the work which the exalted

workman designs to carry out in us to his glory, but so to maintain ourselves that the material is always ready for the workman to do his work in us. St Paul says, 'The spirit of the Lord descends from on high in secret, working in whom it will and when and where and how it will in him in whom it meets no hindrance.' In the children of God. They are led by this spirit.—It is thus ye shall know yourselves. Next, we have to know God. To this St Dionysius exhorted one of his disciples, saying, 'Up, friend, divest thyself of things and put off thyself that thou mayst understand the Sovran Good.' Of it three things are predicated. First, it is a unique force entire in everything; next, a unique good embracing everything. (Thirdly) to know God really ye must know him as the unknown. So Dionysius says.

God's will is our welfare, and our welfare consists in knowing God and doing accordingly. Here timorousness mutters in the soul, both she will and she will not. And hard on this comes rage of soul. When she divines that it remains for her to be somewhat that he is not, she is transported with ire. She would sooner come to naught than have or take aught that belongs to him. 'Lord,' she cries, 'my welfare lies in thy never calling me to mind; and forbid, I pray thee, any creature ever to console me. I rejoice that my powers never come before thy face.'

See what the soul means by her strange words: 'my welfare lies in thy never calling me to mind.' She wots right well that she has never been one instant out of his mind and that is her felicity. She begs not to be comforted by any creature, because she is in indigence right comfortless where her disconsolateness is her one consolation. And when she says her powers come not before his face? Observe what God's face is. We see ourselves best in what is called our face. So too where God is manifest to himself in the mysterious stillness of his own essence. This revelation is called the face of the Godhead. The soul is well aware that, accompanied by her powers, she can never enter the absolute stillness where he is manifest to himself. Hence she desires her powers not to come before his face, *i.e.* his self-revelation. See, her powers halt at its reflection in the Trinity and only the pure essence of her spirit is flashed from the stillness of her own power straight into this perfect revelation. As a master says: 'Where pure and purified are one the powers of the soul are at an end.' Meaning that in the one perfect nature the pure nature of the spirit transcends all its powers. St Paul says, 'He who is joined to God is one spirit with him.' Amen.

XIV

ST JOHN SAYS, 'I SAW THE WORD IN GOD'

St John says, 'I saw the Word in God.' God is abstract being, pure perception, which is perceiving itself in itself. St John means that the Son is in the Father, in his nature. 'I saw the Word with God.' Here he is referring to the intellect which, flowing into God eternally, proceeded forth from God in distinction of Person, namely, the Son. 'I saw the Word before God.' This means that the Son is ever being born of the Father and that he is the image of the Father. 'In the Word there is only the Word,' refers to the eternal emanation of creatures in the Word. 'I saw the Word under God'; the Son become man, as God said, 'I have loved you in the reflection of my darkness.' God's darkness is his nature which is unknowable. Good people know it not and no creature can divine it; therefore it is a darkness. While God was flowing in his own darkness the Son was not distinct from him. In the darkness of his nature the Father flowed as Person so far as he was pregnant. The Father gave his Son birth and gave him his own nature; he gave him not his Person: his nature he can give away but he can give to none his Person for that is the product of his unborn essence. The Father spoke himself and all creatures in his Son; the Father spoke himself to all creatures in his Son. The Father turning back into himself speaks himself in himself; he flows back into himself with all creatures. As Dionysius says, 'God proceeded into himself,' meaning that his hidden nature suffices him, which is concealed from creatures. The soul cannot follow him into his nature, except he absorb her altogether, and then in him she is made dark of all created lights. The darkness of creatures is their incomprehensibility in their simple nature, that is, in the nothing from which they were created. In this uncreated light they discern his uncreatedness. Into his uncreatedness they flow in the reflection of his darkness.

—'Tell me, good Sir, do Father, Son and Holy Ghost speak the same word in the Godhead or has each a different word?'—In the Godhead there is but one word; in it the Father in the Godhead speaks into his unborn essence and into his born essence, the Father flowing into his Son with all that he is and the Son speaks the same word, and the Father and the Son flow into the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost speaks the same word. They speak this one simple word in their essence and each speaks the same word in his own Person, and in their common nature they discourse the truth and the Persons receive the essence as it is essentially. Yet the Persons receive from one another. They bow down to

the essence in praise, lauding the essence; and the unborn essence pronounces its unborn word in the Persons, lauding the Persons, and the Persons receive the essence every whit and pass it on to one another. This unborn essence is self-sufficient, without birth and without activity. Birth and activity are in the Persons. The Persons say they are the truth and that creatures have none of the truth. When the soul attains to this divine speech she speaks this very truth and is the Deity to every creature as well as to herself. This comes of her indivisible nature and therein creatures are a matter of the will. The bad are bad and the good good, the Persons preserving justice in the Godhead. They give the bad their due and the good theirs.

St Dionysius says, 'God is the Prime Cause, and God has fashioned all things for himself who is the cause of all; and his works are all wrought in the likeness of the First Cause.' Father and Son show forth the first cause, and the Son is playing in the Father with all things for he proceeded forth from him. The Son plays before Father with all things, the Son plays below the Father with all things. The Father begat the Son with his Godhead and with all things. The Father begat his Son in his Godhead with all things. The Father begat his Son into his Godhead with all things. The Godhead is the several Persons and the fullness of the Persons. The Godhead is not given to any thing. On coming to its knowledge the soul sees God and glancing back into herself she sees that the Godhead is in all things. Receiving into her the likeness of the creator she creates what she will but cannot give it essence: she gives it form and is herself its matter and its eternal activities are in her; these are in the eternal birth. Its temporal activities are in time, where God gives his works essence, form and matter out of nothing, which the soul is unable to do; God reduces his works to the unity of Christ and this order shall not pass away but shall be raised up to the glory of the one. Soul, transcending order, enters the naked Godhead where she is seen when God is seen in the soul as God. This soul has God as God in her, she has gotten in her the image of her creator.

Now mark the difference between the work of God and creature. God has done all things for himself, for he is the universal cause and all his works are wrought in the likeness of the first cause and creatures all work according to the likeness of the first cause. That is the intention they have towards God. God made all things from nothing, infusing into them his Godhead so that all things are full of God. Were they not full of the Godhead they would all perish. The Trinity does all the work in things and creatures exploit the power of the Trinity, creatures working as creatures and God as God, while man mars the work so far as his intention is

evil. When a man is at work his body and soul are united, for body cannot act without the soul. When the soul is united with God she does divine work, for God cannot work without the soul and the soul cannot work without God. God is the soul's life just as the soul is the body's, and the Godhead is the soul of the three Persons in that it unifies them and in that it has dwelt in them for ever. And since the Godhead is in all things it is all soul's soul. But in spite of its being all soul's soul, the Godhead is not creatures' soul in the way it is the Trinity's. God does one work with the soul; in this work the soul is raised above herself. The work is creature, grace to wit, which bears the soul to God. It is nobler than the soul as admitting her to God; but the soul is the nobler in her admissibility. This creature which has neither form nor matter nor any being of its own, translates the soul out of her natural state into the supernatural.

To his eternally elect God gives his spirit as it is, without means; they cannot miss it. Creatures God is going to make at his good pleasure he has known eternally as creatures, for in God they are creatures albeit nothing in themselves: they are uncreated creatures. Creatures are always more noble in God than they are in themselves. In God the soul shall see her own perfection without image and shall see the difference between things uncreated and created and she shall distinguish God from Godhead, nature from Person, form from matter. The Father is the beginning of the Godhead, he is the well-spring in the Godhead, overflowing into all things in eternity and time. The Godhead is a heaven of three Persons. The Father is God and a Person not born nor proceeding from any; and the Son is God and a Person and born of the Father; and the Holy Ghost is God and a Person proceeding from both. St Paul speaks of the uncreated spirit flowing into the created spirit (or mind). This meeting which befalls the created spirit is her saving revelation; it happens in the soul who breaks through the boundaries of God to lose herself in his uncreated naught. The three Persons are one God, one in nature, and our nature is shadowing God's nature in perpetual motion; having followed him from naught to aught and into that which God is to himself, there she has no motion of her naught. Aught is suspended from the divine essence; its progression is matter, wherein the soul puts on new forms and puts off her old ones. The change from one into the other is her death: the one she doffs she dies to, and the one she dons she lives in.

St John says, 'Blessed are the dead that die in God: they are buried where Christ is buried.' Upon which St Dionysius comments thus: Burial in God is the passage into uncreated life. The power the soul goes in is her matter, which power the soul

can never approfound for it is God and God is changeless, albeit the soul changes in his power. As St Dionysius says, ' God is the mover of the soul.' Now form is a revelation of essence. St Dionysius says, ' Form is matter's aught. Matter without form is naught.' So the soul never rests till she is gotten into God who is her first form and creatures never rest till they have gotten into human nature : therein do they attain to their original form, God namely. As St Dionysius hath it, ' God is the beginning and the middle and the end of all things.'

Then up and spake the loving soul, ' Lord, when enjoyest thou thy creatures ? '—' That do I at high noon when God is reposing in all creatures and all creatures in God.' St Augustine says, ' All things are God,' meaning, they have always been in God and shall return to God. So when St Dionysius says, ' All things are naught,' he means they are not of themselves and that in their egress and their ingress they are as incomprehensible as naught. When St Augustine says, ' God is all things,' he means he has the power of all things, one more noble than he ever gave to creatures. And St Dionysius' dictum; ' God is naught,' implies that God is as inconceivable as naught. As King David sings, ' God has assigned to everything its place : to fish the water, birds the air and beasts the field and to the soul the Godhead.' The soul must die in every form save God : there at her journey's end her matter rests and God absorbs the whole of the powers of the soul, so now behold the soul a naked spirit. Then, as St Dionysius says, the soul is not called soul, she is the sovran power of God wherewith God's will is done. It is at this point St Augustine cries, ' Lord thou hast bereft me of my spirit ! ' Whereupon Origen remarks, ' Thou art mistaken, O Augustine. It is not thy spirit, it is thy soul-powers that are taken from thee.' The soul unites with God like food with man, which turns in eye to eye, in ear to ear. So does the soul in God turn into God : combining with each divine power she is that power in God ; and God combines with the soul and is each power in the soul ; and the two natures flowing in one light, the soul comes utterly to naught. That she is she is in God. The divine powers swallow her up out of sight just as the sun draws up things out of sight.

What God is to himself no man may know. God is in all things, self-intent. God is all in all and to each thing all things at once. And the soul shall be the same. What God has by nature is the soul's by grace. God is nothing at all to anything ; God is nothing at all to himself, God is nothing that we can express. In this sense Dionysius says, ' God is all things to himself for he bears the form of all things.' He is big with himself in a naught : there all things are God, and are not, the same as we were. When we

were not then God was heaven and hell and all things. St Dionysius says that 'God is not', meaning that he bears himself in a *not*, namely, the not-knowing of all creatures, and this *not* draws the soul through all things, over all things and out of all things into that superlative *not* where she is not-known to any creature. There she is not, has not, wills not, she has abandoned God and everything to God. Now God and heaven gone, the soul is finally cut off from every influx of divinity, so his spirit is no longer given to her. Arrived at this the soul belongs to the eternal life rather than creation; her uncreated spirit lives rather than herself: the uncreated, eternally-existent which is no less than God. Wherewith being all-pervaded to the total loss of her own self, the soul at length returns without herself to eternal indigence, for what is left alive in her is nothing less than God. Thus she is poor of self. This is the point where soul and Godhead part and the losing of the Godhead is the finding of the soul, for the spirit which is uncreated drawing on the soul to its own knowledge she comes nearer to the not-being of the Godhead than by knowing all the Father ever gave. [The gift of the Father is the positive existence of all creatures in the Person of his Son and with the Son the Holy Ghost as well. For the Persons must be looked on as inseparate, albeit distinct illuminations of the understanding.] And so far as she attains this in the body she enjoys the eternal wont and escapes her own.

We ought to be eternally as poor as when we were not and then our kingdom shall not pass away, abiding as it does in God whose it is eternally. The Godhead gave all things up to God; it is as poor, as naked and as idle as though it were not: it has not, wills not, wants not, works not, gets not. St Dionysius says, 'Be the soul never so bare the Godhead is barer': a naught from which no shoot was ever lopped nor ever shall be. It is this counsel of perfection the soul is straining after more than after anything that God contains or anything she can conceive of God. Saith the bride in the Book of Love, 'The form of my beloved passed by me and I cannot overtake him.' It is God who has the treasure and the bride in him, the Godhead is as void as though it were not. God has consumed the form of the soul and formed her with his form into his form. Now she gets all things free from matter, as their creator possesses them in him, and resigns the same to God.

Ours to contain all things in the same perfection wherein the eternal wisdom has eternally contained them. Ours to expire them as the Holy Ghost has expired them eternally. Ours to be all things' spirit and all things' spirit to us in the spirit. Ours to know all and deify ourselves with all. Ours to be God by grace

as God is God by nature ; ours to resign the same to God and be as poor as when we were not. In this state we are as free as when we were not : free as the Godhead in its non-existence. Christ says, ' Blessed are the poor in spirit.' These same poor in spirit enjoy the Father without let or hindrance. The Father knows no difference between this soul and him save that he has by nature what she has by grace. For as Christ declares, ' Them that follow me I will bring to where I am.' ' Blessed are the poor in spirit : God's kingdom is in them.' These spiritual poor are those who have abandoned everything to God as he possessed them when we were not and the naught itself. In this naught dwells God and in God dwells this soul. There she has no dwelling and thereinto no creature can get in its own right and no creature can go higher.

XV

THE THREE CREATIONS

The three Persons made creatures out of nothing to enjoy the uses of the blessed Trinity. There is difference of wont in the Persons and their powers ; for the essence being self-sufficient there is nothing in the essence to enjoy excepting unity, so the soul demands nothing, knows nothing, wills nothing.

As to the Persons, the one knows the others so far as they are Persons, for one Person begets the others. Essence begets not. In the domain of Person, one is receiving from another. The Son receives all he possesses from the Father ; the Holy Ghost receives all he possesses from the Father and the Son, and each of the Persons receives from the others presence and well-being and co-operation and mutual delight. As to their activity, each one finds itself entire as essence in the others and each enjoys the others as Persons and itself in both the others.

We speak of three creations. Birth is called creation, and being made from nothing, and being raised in grace to higher grace. The same applies especially to Christ. If birth is a creation then Christ was the creature of his Father in his eternal birth of Person and of nature. Christ himself declared, ' Wisdom created wisdom.' The creation of the Son has ever been to him his whole existence, who is still being born of the Father eternally with all that he is, and this birth remains in the Father eternally. St Dionysius says, ' God created a God as good as God.' Inasmuch as the Father conceives himself of himself he is his own creation. As St Dionysius says, ' God is his own self-begotten Son.' In eternity, that is. Creatures abide in eternity as being in the God-bearing Godhead. The Son knows all things essentially in the

essence of the Father who, essentially, has the potentiality of all things that shall happen and shall not happen. He has in his Person the universal image, so that he knows all things in common with the Father and wields joint power over what has happened, what is happening and what is still to happen, as well as over what God could do an he would that never happens. As the Father stretches his will to things that are to happen so the Son stretches his wisdom to effect their happening ; and as the Father directs his will towards things that shall not happen, the Son directs his wisdom to prevent them happening.

The second creation is that of all the three Persons at once who are one in their work of making all things from nothing. This applies pre-eminently to Christ's soul, for she was created from nothing in time. The images existing in the middle Person are imprinted in his soul's potentiality so that she knows ideally, all things past, present and to come. But things that are not going to happen, things which God in his omnipotence could do but which will not take place, albeit possible essentially, these his soul does not know for that belongs to God alone. This light is creature, created from nothing and is supernatural to the soul. His soul has one light in common with the angels. This is the image impressed in her wherein she perceives in herself things that have happened and are happening ; but in this image she sees nothing of those things which are going to happen except God grant her knowledge of them. And this is supernatural to the soul.

The third creation is the raising of his body from grace to higher grace, that is, something extra to his animal nature. In his animal nature he cannot see into peoples' consciousness ; in his animal nature he could give no sign nor know about the future unless God granted it. Christ was so foolish as a child he did not know his father or his mother. St Ambrose says : ' He was created from grace to higher grace when he rose from death to immortality.' Christ sees in heaven, with his fleshly eyes, only what is before him ; he must turn round to see what is behind him. So the Son has never known the Father in that fundamental mode wherein the Three are united in one nature. That mode Christ's soul was sharing when, at the moment of her creation she was bereft of it and prevented from seeing her divine nature. Christ's soul enjoys divine nature by grace as God does by nature. This is so far removed from creature that never a drop has ever leaked into any creature. The furthest limit of man's knowledge is an intuition of how the three Persons enjoy their divine nature. To this none can attain unless his soul is plunged into the consciousness of the created and uncreated

natures confluent in her where she stands in the midst and, seeing straight into them both, has at that point pure intuition of her wont and how what she enjoys there is withdrawn from her and how, though borne along with and by grace, she is still unable to apprehend God's nature. She clearly sees that she is God's and not her own at all. She is acutely sensible that enjoying and suffering are identical. That Christ should have action and passion both in one, bodily, that was the wonder. His soul must have suffered in all her powers. Her highest power suffering as much more than the rest as it was more capable of suffering. One wise doctor says, 'In this intuition the soul has perfect joy, for perfect joy is perfect knowledge.' Christ says, 'They that know thee Father and thy Son whom thou hast sent, have life eternal.' Also he says, 'Pray, that your joy may be full.' St Dionysius says, fullness of joy is perfect consciousness, a balanced interchange of nature, whereby the soul beholds herself in the mirror of the Godhead. God is the mirror, unveiled to whom he will and veiled from whom he will. St Peter says, 'God fashioned his nature and the Persons in that nature and chose the nature not the Persons.' St Dionysius says the soul has a light that lights her to work. By the light God casts on the angels next him they cast themselves back into God with all they are. As St Bernard observes, 'Minds do not flow back into God in their natural light; the Godhead absorbs them in its own light without their seeing.' Now St John says, 'God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.' When God reveals himself to the soul and the soul loves God, she is in God and God is in her. When the sun shines and the eye sees it, the eye is in the sun and the sun is in the eye. Well then, friend mine, here you have the notion, which it defies me to express in words, for the divine nature in the Persons is a mirror, beyond the reach of any word. In so far as the soul can project herself beyond words so far she approaches that mirror. In that mirror the union is simply one of likeness.

When, Lord, I was in thee I was unnecessitous in my nothingness; it was thy look, thy notice of me, that made me indigent. If it be death for the soul to part from God, then it is death to her to emanate from God. All change is a dying. Wherefore we die from time to time and the soul dies all-dying in the wonder of the Godhead, impotently grasping at the divine nature. In the naught she is undone and comes to nothing. In this not-being she is buried, in un-knowing she is merged in the unknown, in unthinking merged in the unthought-of, in un-love one with the unloved. Death's grip none can unloose: it severs life from limb and the soul from God and casts her into the Godhead

wherein, sepultured, she is ignored by every creature. She is forgotten as one changed within the tomb nor is she held in any man's embrace. She like God is incomprehensible. For the dead who have died in the Godhead are beyond our ken, like the dead are who die here to the body. That death is the soul's eternal quest. Slain in the three Persons she loses her naught and is hurled into the Godhead. Where she discovers the face of her naught. 'Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee,' says our Lord; and of his incomprehensible beauty she declares, 'Thou art more fair.' There she sees the secret art of God: how marvellously God contrived that nothing should be indigent, yet without detriment thereto. St Dionysius says: 'No wonder God made the soul indigent with a look, when the sun, unbidden, gives life to mites and worms in rotten wood.' The soul, perceiving God's immensity and her own insignificance, casts herself out of God's heart and out of all creatures and rests upon her naked nothingness: the divine power has her in its keeping. As St Dionysius says: 'All things are naught at the command of God.' Again he says: 'The look which goes from God into the soul is the beginning of faith whereby I believe things not revealed to me.' So far as the soul sinks down in faith into the unknown good, so far she is one with the unknown good and is unknown to self or any creature. She well knows that she is but knows not what she is. Not till she knows all that there is to know does she cross over to the unknown good. This crossing is obscure to many a religious.

The nature of the soul is such that where she is at all there she is altogether. She is entire in every limb, for where her nature is at all there it is wholly. So is the Godhead in all places and in all creatures and in each wholly.

Unnatured nature is natured only so far as it is natureable. It natures not itself but the Father natures his Son in natured nature, for the Father is as much natured as unnatured nature, seeing that it is one with him. The Father is alone in unnatured nature and is the first in natured nature. And in natured nature the Son is naturing with the Father, for (Father) and Son nature the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost exists with the Father and the Son in natured nature and natures not. In (un)-natured nature they are one, natured nature distinguishing the Persons; and the Persons are as eternal in their Persons as the unnatured nature in its nature and their natured nature is as eternal in them as their unnatured nature, and this is nothing else than one God in three Persons, who nature creatures, each in its own nature, and give them the power and activity that is best suited to them. So dear each creature holds its nature that it would have no other.

A master says, 'If sorrow could befall the Father he would rue his inability to make all things divine by nature.' When the soul in her simple nature turns into God's nature forthwith she is made one with God, but to heed discrete powers and persons and virtues hampers the soul's divine unity. Her common sense endows the other senses with sight, hearing, touch and savour, albeit in itself no more than one. And the perceptions of the outward senses are all referred to common sense. Discursive reason sorts out what is good and, leaving out the animal and gross, presents it to the memory for union with the soul. Her highest power introduces it to her understanding which has intuition of God's will, and so it is conveyed into the soul who harmonises all with God's good will.

God in himself is simple good and undivided. The names the soul gives God are taken from herself. Albeit threefold in his Person, God is the one and only good by nature. He is omnipotent good in the Father, clear wisdom in the Son and pure goodness in the Holy Ghost. He is threefold and he is one in creatures generally; and of those burning spirits who are consumed in the fire and brought to naught in him he is the impartible substance. When, having harmonised all things in herself, the soul is reduced to her impartible substance, then she inhales the powers of the divine nature and exhales them from her being into the being of the divine nature which permeates her throughly, the two beings meeting in one point which is common to the soul and God and the variety of Persons hinders not their unity nor does their nature interfere with the variety of Persons. He is threefold and one in every Person in his born and unborn natures severally and the Persons are not admitted to the essence. To receive one Person is to receive the divine nature threefold in its unity. For one Person in essence is as good as three distinct.

Happy the soul who, taking this transcendental flight, receives all things in the naked Godhead. That soul is buried in the face of God; she is rapt into heaven wherein the three Persons dwell in the oneness of their nature. This is the hidden Godhead whereof no man can speak. Blessed are they who make this passover: all things are known to them in truth and they themselves unknown to any creature. So far as they are above creatures they are God and super-creaturely, owing to their unity with God. God's face conceals them, every shadow of them, in itself. Where two unite, the stronger draws the weaker to it. Christ says, 'Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you.' Blessed are the chosen, they bear God's image. Christ says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.' The poor in spirit are those who have abandoned all to God as

he possessed them when we were not. God's kingdom means the soul being full of God and nothing of herself. In this nothing God dwells and the soul dwells in the same nothing. There she changes not and thereinto no creature can get in its own right, and creature can rise no higher. St Dionysius says, 'God dwells in the nothing.' O Dionysius, that is not enough! God dwells in the nothing-at-all that was prior to nothing, in the hidden Godhead of pure gnosis whereof no man durst speak. Unity is of God alone. As St Dionysius says: 'Did God not dwell in the naught things would all perish.' St Dionysius, that is not enough! Did God not dwell in the nothing-at-all sustaining creatures with his might, they would all come to nothing for they by nature pass away into the nothingness from which they were created. Therefore God dwells in the nothing-at-all that was prior to nothing.

Creature has access to God, who is her being, energising in the power which moves her to rise from naught to aught. Now St Paul asks, and Augustine too, 'How did I get from naught to aught, from worm to God, from creature to creator?' The soul shall be so one with God she weens that nothing is save God alone and that God made no creature save herself alone. The soul that makes this transcendental passage enters the universal peace. She is God as he is in himself. Christ says, 'I have been man for you and if ye are not God for me ye wrong me.' God became man that we might become God. God in his God-nature lay hid in human nature so that we saw naught but man. And so this soul shall hide her in God's nature until we can see naught but God; not putting on a Person as Christ did but wholly immersed in the divine nature. God is not a nature like a creature is which has some quality another lacks. The brewer who is also baker we cannot simply call a brewer for he is baker too. God is the nature of each nature: he is all natures' nature undivided. He is the light of lights, the life of lives, the being of beings, the reason of reasons. He is all natures' common nature. As Dionysius says: 'We cannot say he is a nature seeing that he is impartible and there is nothing like him.' And again St Dionysius says: 'We know God only in unknowing.'

When God enters the soul he comes in with all things. Although in God there is but one thing simply, the soul possesses it as separate notions, angels and devils and all. The soul is able to conceive all things in God and to discern what God is in them and what they are in God by soaring up to the supernal simplicity, into unknowing. St Dionysius says, 'That is Lordship, transcending earthly things and the likes of them and raising them to the heights.' Christ says, 'Them that follow me I will raise to where I am.' The Father speaks himself into the soul in his Son.

Now the Son is the Word of the Father, so the Father reveals to the soul in this wise that he is shapeless in his divine nature. The soul, speaking herself back to the Father in the selfsame Word, says she has no shape either in her naught, so she abandons her naught in the Word and plunges shapeless into the unshapen.

The Godhead is an abstract simple thing, omnipotent above all Person as well as having the power of the inseparate three Persons : giving to none, receiving from none, save as therein subsisting. St Dionysius says, ' The Godhead has gotten all things.' The three Persons are in the Godhead ; they reveal of it to creatures and each other as much as they are able to receive. The Father reveals the Godhead to himself and to his Son and Father and Son reveal it to the Holy Ghost and the three Persons reveal it to creatures and the Godhead wantons with the Word and before the Word and above the Word and the Word cannot comprehend it. Were the three Persons undistinguished in the Godhead, the Godhead would not be revealed at all and creatures would not have been created. The eternal activities are the cause of creatures. The Father reveals the Godhead, the Son reveals the Father, the Holy Ghost reveals them both : This revelation the Godhead gets from things beneath it. The supreme perfection is indigent of creatures. So it befalls from time to time that when the moon, shooting below the sun, monopolises all the sunlight and the sun is said to be eclipsed, that then a star exerts its force upon the moon and drawn it off the sun ; thus the sun owes its light to things beneath it.

The soul gets from the Trinity those finite things commensurate with her powers. Out of the naked Godhead there shines into the simple being of the soul a single light invisible to her powers, both high and low. For though the Godhead has in it all things, it has them all in one, not piecemeal. It begets not, so it is not Father ; it receives not, so it is not Son nor Holy Ghost. The three Persons are God in person and in nature Godhead. The Godhead shines through the distinction of Persons and through separate creatures down to the very lowest, illuminating them and illuminating itself in itself. And when the soul in her naked essence enters into the Godhead, all things are within her ken even the meanest creature ; then she illuminates herself and everything in her and discerns in the Godhead the divine nature and in the variety of Persons she loses her name and the Persons lose their names in the unity and everything the unity comprehends loses its name in the unity. And here the soul, as good now as her naught, both draw together to their close in the Godhead's naught, where her powers are useless. As St Dionysius observes, ' God passes away.' By which he signifies that the

soul in her naked essence has escaped her powers. Her powers have lost their deity, and the pure substance of their deity as well, to the Persons and their powers, which powers react upon the essence by hindering the swing-back of the Three to unity. Here love loses her name and all things in the Godhead's naught, now the soul has flowed into her aught. In the Godhead's naught, the Father has his consummation and the three Persons their one nature wherein they give to creatures the perfection of their created aught and the soul in her aught in the Godhead's naught courses through all things all undisturbed in her being's aught. As St Dionysius says, 'The soul is not moved in her naught in the Godhead's naught neither does the soul move the Godhead in its naught. There she is so great . . ., she flows to him as it were in a light.' St Dionysius says, 'The Godhead has come to naught for the powers of the soul cannot comprehend it.'

Blessed and praised be the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the unity of their divine nature. Blessed and praised be Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, one Person of divine nature and human nature.

XVI

THE SOUL'S RAGE

The soul is furious for self-knowledge. Her face is lit with passion, red with rage for the arrears withheld from her in God, because she is not all God is by nature, because she has not all God has by nature.

The masters say there is no fiercer appetite than a friend's desire to possess his friend and all that he possesses. The soul proclaims her rage so boundless she cannot be appeased by him. The bonds of love are all too cruel for her. Alas! she cries, who shall console me? My misery is too deep. Were I the one creator, beginningless and endless, and had I made creatures and were he soul like me, then I would go straight out of my estate and let her enter in and be God while I was creature; and if it were an obstacle to God to get his being from me, he would be welcome to efface me for I would perish sooner than be a hindrance to him. But seeing it is common to everything created to have somewhat of the eternal in man's nature ever present in it, therefore I know not where to turn to find a place. So I take refuge in myself and there I find the lowest place, aye, one more base than hell for even thence do my shortcomings hound me. It seems I cannot then escape myself. Here I sit me down and herein will I stay. And I beseech thee, Lord, that thou never callest me to mind and forbiddest any creature ever

to console me and deniest to my powers that ever any one of them should come before thy face, lest I offend thee. So I go out and let the soul go in.

The third rage of the soul is that she should be God and that there should not be a single creature, like when God was in his eternity ere he created creature, so that she may enjoy God-nature in its simplicity as he did before. But then his love were lacking to him, for it is the nature of good things to communicate themselves.

Fourthly, she rages to be absolutely nothing but the naked essence, there being neither God nor creature. She asks, What is the good of the three Persons in the Godhead and what is the use of creatures? But hold, she cries, except for them there would be no creatures. That must be the reason why there are three Persons in the Godhead: they are the cause of creatures. God is God-exalted: the creatures he has made cannot exalt him. All that creatures do to God is themselves: such glory as they can give to God is the same as they are.

XVII

THE TWOFOLD WAY [1]

Ego sum via, veritas et vita, 'I am the way, the truth and the life,' says our Lord Jesus Christ. Mark specially the words, 'I am the way.' In a twofold sense we take Christ as the way: according to his manhood and according to his Godhead. His manhood was the way of our own manhood. This we have to follow, both the counsel of perfection as a whole and also in its parts. If but one of our members leaves the way of his example we are thereby deformed. St Paul declares we ought to live so that God may find in us the perfect reflection of all his divine works, *i.e.* we must copy the exemplar he has set before us. That is true spiritual life. But this is greatly hampered by numerous defects; mainly numerous interior shortcomings due to the powers of our soul being disorderly. The joy of the soul should be so set upon its proper work that no created things can gladden her but only the fact that her consciousness is clear. As Christ said to his disciples, 'Rejoice not in anything except in this, that your names are written in the book of life.' And the fear of the soul should be so well controlled that she fears nothing under God either for person or possessions, nor aught that may be inflicted upon her whether by God or creature. And similarly with the

[1] See Pfeiffer, *Zt. f. dtsch. Alt.*, Bd. 8 (2), 1850, and Preger, *Zt. f. hist. Theol.*, Bd. 34, 1864 (two versions). Also Jostes, Nos. 18 and 19. For authorship see Preger's *Geschichte*, vol. i, p. 318.

other powers, desire and thought. The entire soul, in short, has to be gathered up into the impartible simplicity of her will and her will must fly at the highest good and fasten itself thereto. But St Paul says, ' He who is fastened to God becomes one spirit with him.'

Behold how rich is the spirit grown thus one spirit with God ! No things can enrich it though it hold sway over them all. For things are necessaries whereas its riches consist in its dwelling in a nature superior to creaturely necessity. He who has nothing and needs nothing is richer than the man who possesses all things with necessity. St Paul says : ' Our sufficiency is in God alone whose able ministers we are.'

Nor do the virtues enrich the spirit. Doctors declare that it is not, properly speaking, the virtues which enrich the spirit but the fruit of virtues. The soul has virtues of necessity. But virtues being a necessity, the spirit is of necessity not enriched by them. The utmost a spirit can attain to in this body is to dwell in a condition beyond the necessity of virtues ; where goodness as a whole comes natural to it so that not only is it possessed of virtues but virtue is part and parcel of it : it is virtuous not of necessity but of innate good nature. Arrived at this the soul has traversed and transcended all necessity for virtues : they are now intrinsic in her. Now she has reached the goal whither the virtues merely pointed her, to wit, the infusion of the Holy Ghost. This is the fruit of virtue ; this alone serves to enrich the spirit. Concerning this St Paul says : ' Put on the new man, Christ,' who was in this way our way.

The other way is the way of his Godhead.

—What way has the Godhead and where can it go seeing it is in all places ; and wherewithal does it go seeing that it has no feet nor anything bodily ?

—The way of the Godhead is the unity wherein the three Persons run together into one essence. The going of the Persons consists in their mutual knowing and loving, each knowing and loving itself in the others. Thus do the Persons walk together in unity.

The feet with which the Godhead enters the Persons and the Persons the essence are : the one foot of the Godhead is foresight of all things ; the other, pleasure in the things eternally foreseen, for God enjoys eternalwise the contingency of things. This refers to the eternal image. He enjoys only good in all things : image of all things which is very God.

It may be questioned, What pleasure does God enjoy ?

All things must needs please him for he who saw was God and what he saw was likewise God. In their eternal image which is God himself, God saw himself and saw things as a whole. God

enjoyed himself, God being in himself the unique one. The soul sees her impartible idea in God, which has never come out of him. This her multiform image does, and the consummation of her spirit lies in the reduction of its here created aught to the naught of its eternal prototype. God is the origin of the spirit and the spirit never rests till it returns into its origin, to its eternal prototype. Essentially this prototype is God wherefore it aye eludes the spirit which is never able quite to apprehend it. Yet it divines how it has been in God eternalwise without itself; and the supremest bliss the spirit knows is to relapse into its origin, to its eternal image, wherein, as self, it is lost altogether. There the spirit loses its uses not its essence. The essence of the Godhead sucks the spirit out of itself into itself, making it as itself, so that there seems now but one essence. As though I were to take blood of a serpent—which is very red—and pour it into a transparent glass; the glass would lose its seeming not its substance. So in this union the divine light illuminates and outshines the spirit which shines one light with it. The spirit loses its seeming not its substance for God has fetched the spirit out and united it with himself. Natheless the spirit in this union can never plumb the depths of Godhead. As St Paul discovered when, caught up to the third heaven, he saw things not permissible, nay, not possible to speak of, and cried out: 'O thou depth of the riches of wisdom and knowledge, how unsearchable are thy judgments and thy ways past finding out.' God's riches consist in having nothing and being nothing that can be clothed in words. His wisdom consists in the well-ordering of things. God's knowledge is his conception of himself in his supernal light. Concerning which St Dionysius says, 'The light God dwells in is his own nature which is known to none besides himself.' This is the highway of the Godhead which no creature ever trod. Of it God spake by his prophet: 'As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than thy ways.'—St Augustine says, There is nothing more difficult and more exacting nor at the same time more useful and salutary to the soul than excursions in the science of the holy Trinity and unity.

Mark well, therefore, the meaning of the Persons and the essence.

—What is a Person in the Trinity?

—A Person is that which preserves its own rational individuality apart from any other distinct Person. One Person is not another. The work of the Persons consists in the genesis and output of things. Genesis belongs to the Father alone; outputting of things to the Trinity jointly.

—What is the essence of the three Persons in the Trinity?

—That which, impartible, contains all things impartibly while of itself as essence it neither generates nor produces things. That is done by the three Persons which activate the essence or it could do nothing. Nevertheless the Persons do not act as three; they work as one God.

—What is the potentiality of the essence?

—The potentiality of the essence lies in not being a rational Person: in persisting in its essential unity. Not that it differs from the Persons; this same essence is the essential nature of the Persons and the being of all things. Existence of all existing things, life of all living things, the light of lights and nature of natures: all this it is in its impartibility. Not so with the Persons; they are not the personality of things as essence is the essence of all things. The Father is not able to be anybody's person but his own. He gat another Person out of his Person not out of his essence: with his nature in his nature. That the Father was able to produce a Son so rarely, so consummately his like, a God as perfect as himself, is due to his essential nature. When he begets the Son the Father gives him another Person than his own Person but not another nature nor another essence than his own. It follows that the essence is revealed in the procession of the Persons. The Persons are able to reveal the essence which cannot of itself reveal itself, seeing that of itself, as essence, it neither gets nor bears. This impotence of the essence is its chief potentiality; nevertheless it is revealed to itself.

The Persons know and comprehend the essence equally. The essence bears the same relation to all the Persons. Now it is a question among theologians whether or no the personality has basic knowledge and comprehension of the essence, seeing that the essence is comprehended only by the essence?

The Persons have basic knowledge and comprehension of the essence because this is the Persons' own essential nature; moreover, the essence is not comprehended wholly save by the three Persons, whose nature it is. The Persons comprehend the essence wholly, they being God in Person by reason of their comprehension of his essence which is their own essential nature. And so far as the soul comprehends this essence she too is divine. Though what she comprehends of it is no bigger than a drop compared with all the boundless ocean. Still it is God whole. The surplus good which is ever baffling her apprehension, that is the shadowy abyss wherein, self-lost, she sinks eternally.

It may be questioned, Why is there not one Person like one essence?—I answer that, existing things exist not from themselves but in eternity are descended from an origin which is the origin

of its own self and in time have been created out of nothing by the blessed Trinity. Their eternal origin is the Father and the universal image in him is the Son ; love to this same image is the Holy Ghost. Had not this archetype of all things been always in the Father, the Father could never have wrought anything at all. That is, in his modeless essence. There must be more than one Person, for it was in the eternal procession (that is, in the begetting of) the Son that things as a whole emanated from the Father and not from themselves. This eternal procession is the cause of things on their eternal side, but in time they were created from nothing and in this sense they are creatures. In the eternal procession wherein they flowed without themselves, they are God in God. For as St Dionysius says, the Prime Cause generates all things in the likeness of itself.

Now mark the difference of this emanation in eternity and time. What is the (temporal) emanation ? It is the indulgence of his love of clear discrimination. So we come forth into time by constraint of his love. The eternal procession is the revelation of himself to himself. The knower being that which is known. This is the eternal flow no drop of which did ever fall into any created intelligence ; it is the Son from the Father. In the temporal emanation things flowed forth finite. In the eternal emanation they remain infinite. The flow goes flowing on in itself. As St Dionysius hath it, ' God is a fountain flowing into itself.'

The Father is the origin of his Son, in his eternal child-bearing ; Father and Son originate their Spirit, in the eternal out-pouring. But, someone may question, how about the Father-nature ? Is it the cause (of the essence or is the essence cause) of the Paternity ?

What follows needs clear thinking. Essence as essence neither gives nor takes. Now were the essence origin of the Father then the essence, being parent, would not be essence, it would be Person. But it is not ; for essence in its unity is not Person. Again, were paternity the origin of essence the cause of this would be the paternal Person. But this is not so either. The Father in Person is a cause but not of essence ; for paternity and essence have the same characteristic. That is why, in his paternity, he is the omnipotent cause. The essence cannot be apart from Person nor can Person be apart from nature, as ye can see. For nothing that exists can be without its nature, since it cannot take leave of itself ; it must be what it is. Now the Father is a Person and he cannot be a Person without a nature nor can his nature be without a Person. Given his nature, there must be someone whose nature it is. Note then that the essence can in nowise

exist without distinction and hypostasis. Person and hypostasis can in nowise be without their nature, to wit, their essence.

Thus it is demonstrated that neither is the essence cause of paternity nor paternity cause of the essence, for neither can be without the other. The Son cannot be without the Father nor the Father without the Son nor the twain without the Holy Ghost albeit they have three properties to distinguish them apart. Not so with paternity and essence. Neither of these can be without the other. For albeit essence is not Person nor Person essence yet paternity and essence have the same nature so that neither can be said to be the origin of the other; for it is with one and the same nature that the Father originates his Son and these twain originate their Spirit which is of one nature with them both.

All hail to the exalted spirit that is received into this full, this naked knowledge which is unknown to those that are not naked of themselves. For the soul to be naked she must turn away from all the images and forms spread out before her and stop at none of them. For the divine nature is no form nor semblance that she can understand. Being turned away from these towards what transcends them—divorced, that is, from images and forms —the soul receives the likeness of the formless nature of God whose real form has never been revealed to any creature. This is the secret door into the divine nature, which the soul has in the image. For when the soul has naught to stay her, she is ready to pass into the image of God whereto none can attain be he not stripped of spiritual matter. Alas, how they obstruct this secret passage, those who so lightly stop in temporal things! Wherein I also acknowledge my wretchedness. In this sense St Dionysius exhorted his disciples, saying, 'An thou wouldst know the hidden mystery of God, transcend whatever hinders thy pure perception.' When with her pure intellect now illumined with divine light, the naked soul sees God, then she knows herself. And when she sees how apt she is to him, how she is his and how they are both one, then, the burden of the body permitting, she remains thus always. This lofty intuition the soul has of the hidden mystery of God is that of which Job tells: 'In the horror of a vision by night he cometh and whispereth in the ears of men.' What does he mean by the horror? Solicitude for this perception we are speaking of. The nocturnal vision is the revelation of the hidden truth. And the whispering is the flowing union wherein knower and known are one.

This book is difficult and obscure to many people. Publish it not I pray you for God's sake, for it was forbidden to me to do so. If any condemn it, forsooth it is the fault of his blindness for it is

the absolute truth. But if there be in it things inaptly expressed, do not wilfully misunderstand it, for words fail in speaking of the divine nature. Its meaning is clear in the truth which is with Christ and in Christ. Wherefor may he be blessed and praised for ever. Amen.

XVIII

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN

The profound Gospel of St John begins: *in principio erat verbum*, that is to say:

'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' He who would grasp the interpretation of these abstruse writings of St John, which with God's help I shall unfold, let him turn his mind from created things and from his own understanding, that being illumined by God's spirit he may apprehend the meaning I shall give to these dark sayings.

To start with, I premise from his words, 'in the beginning,' a beginning without beginning. In God's name I proceed. In the beginning was the Word: in the source of the effulgent formal light of rational creature and in the origin of its radiance the Word subsisted as the perfect Word, perfect in its wordless potentiality, and this wordless word was with God. This gives me a hint of some distinction, the word being *with* God. Now bring your best intelligence to bear on this. When the bound word of the Persons' unity remained unuttered by the omnipotent intellect, then the Word, suspended in its divine origin transcended all words and names. When it was with God in the providential light dawning devoid of the created universe, then God was manifest to the world. Wherefore I, Meister Eckhart, do affirm: as soon as God was he created the world, the world being with God distinct in name. Whereas God in his motionless power was free from God and every name, God was the unspoken word in the bottomless abyss of his divine nature wherein the Word as such did never throughly understand itself. A thing that understands itself waxes and wanes in the act of understanding, but this word does not wax or wane, it is unchanging in itself, so it has never understood itself in itself albeit it is the intellect of the Father. It was in the beginning of the new procession of the Son that that the Son proceeded forth into the time of natural images united with the word ever-abiding in the paternal source. This same Word wrought its entire work of nature after the fashion of a person, humanly, and the bound Word itself energises in the Father in his characteristic nature, this same word being eternally immanent by nature. And such

being the nature of the Word it is therefore permissible to say, ' In the beginning was the Word.'

I will now give the psychic interpretation, which whosoever cannot understand let him go to the truth for enlightenment.

In the beginning of the divine nature the soul is seeking herself above the points of time. Cast into the abysmal naught of the divine nature, her receptivity all gone, her portion in her felicity is the perfect naught that distinguishes her from creatures generally. As our Lord says, ' Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' But were it that the soul could know God with his own peculiar nature she would be loving something above God. Accordingly I say, that this word subsisting in the essential activity of the divine nature is the soul wholly deprived of receptivity, for with this she would be loving herself and all she is with a personal nature. So she may properly affirm herself to be the work of God in the beginning where, albeit she is formless, she is expressing form. But the form she gets from God is gotten by the sealing in the soul of God's own nature. In the beginning of her nothingness was the word and the word was with God as Son and the Word was God.

He goes on to say, ' The same was in the beginning with God.' Mark, I have just said, ' In the beginning was the Word.' Now I say, ' and the Word was in the beginning with God.' From these cryptic statements it appears that the Word was with God in the beginning. Now I suggest an obvious rational meaning. ' The word was in the beginning with God.' I say, in the principle of paternity this same principle is to the Father the source of his entire Godhead, personal and essential, of Son and Spirit.

St John says, ' The word was in the beginning with God.' Since there is in the Father an outpouring of his causeless divinity into the Word of his Son, this must occur in the paternal mind when, looking upon himself in the light of his abiding intellect, he perceives himself in the answering reflection in his divine essence ; or, in other words, the conception of the Word is God. Moreover by this reflection of his divine nature the intellect of the Father fashions or utters itself in imitation of his nature. So the Word is Son and it is in the divine substance, to wit, in the intellectual reflection of the Father, that occurs this birth of the Word proceeding, thus it is one in essence and distinct in Person. Hence we may say : ' The same was in the beginning with God ' ; and because introspection and reflection of the divine nature are involved in its continuous thinking of itself, therefore this birth is eternal. For if once this reflection were to stop, if mental holiday, inertia, should once supervene, there would remain one God without distinction of Persons. Thus the Word of the

Father subsists eternally in its parental origin. Thereby it is ever being conceived and being born and born. The same was in the father-principle with God as distinct Person. This may well stand in lieu of my former explanations of the passage, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.' This is now fully explained.

Next come the words, 'All things were made by him and without him was not anything made.' Examine this carefully. Granting that all things were made by him and that without him nothing was made, then supposing someone asks me, 'Can God do anything without me seeing, that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made?' I answer, No. God made all things with me standing in the groundless ground of God; God made all things through me while I stood in him idle. While the Father was performing the act peculiar to his nature I was standing right in the gate through which all things return perfectly free to their supreme felicity. As our Lord said, 'Father, to know thee one true God and only Son, that is eternal life.' If life eternal be aught beside the rational soul I have no knowledge of it.

To return. Since I was lying dormant in the personal nature of the Father when he created creatures as a whole in his own nature, it follows that I was working with him; I was the work of God wherein he wrought all things as giver, I being then conscious in my Personal nature of co-operating with the divine nature in this divine process. All the while I was working with him I was resting in God's nature exactly as I was in God before I was created. God made the universe and I with him, standing as I did all undefined albeit substantial in the Father.

Observe further, 'All things were made by him.' If everything was made by him and without him nothing was made, then I affirm there is a power in the soul centred in the perennial now in the paternal heart and in the nature of God; nor does it differ from the essential nature of God save in being the created image of God, as one saint observes: 'What the soul cannot conceive by nature can never be hers by grace.' Like corn-seed dropped into the ground and lost to view, even so the seed or spark in the soul is shed from the essential nature of the Father, and is shining back into the incomprehensible essence, into that wherein the soul conceives superintelligibly, beatifically. There, in beatific mode, bereft of life and power, she returns to the uncreated good where, robbed of every faculty, she is the image in the Trinity, as our Lord said, 'Father, make them one with us.' And when my soul, doffing her beatific habit, is buried in the paternal

field, in the living vine, as the gospel says: when in this sense I lose myself and come into my own as the rightful Son, then I with God do make all things and the Word is in the beginning with God.

Take the next words, 'and without him was not anything made.' I offer this interpretation of them. In all rational creatures I find the quest of God. They forge ahead according to the time and will bestowed upon it. But without him nothing is accomplished, in those creatures namely who, even as the brutes, stop at their outward powers; their mental works are worthless, lacking as they do the divine light and spiritual freedom which gives them permanence. Christ says, 'What my heavenly Father planted not shall be plucked up, yea by the very roots.' That is all I want to say about this passage.

Take the next, 'What was made, in him was the life.' To see what this means, turn O ye blessed and commune with the understanding of your uncreated intellect. 'What was made, in him was the life.' In this eternal procession, wherein all things proceeded forth without themselves, they were *now*; but in time they were created from nothing and their life is in him. Thereof they are the creatures, the effect of that cause, the patent of his power resplendent in luminous detail. Thus we came forth into time; but the revelation of himself to himself is in his eternal procession where the knower is the same as what is known, to wit, the eternal emanation which is the Son from the Father, in whom all things flow forth. Thus what was made was the life in him.

Look you. All rational creatures proceeded from God alike, wherefore I say: all things participate in every intellectual mode. I hold that in her abstract understanding every rational soul knows the uncreated image which is her life. Now if my life and the life of all creatures is in God, I ask then, Can God know himself in me without my soul? I answer, No. Man knows heat apart from the fire and light apart from the sun but God cannot know himself without the soul. And why? Because the soul is the out-flowing stream of the eternal deity and she is sealed in the image of the blessed Trinity. By this she knows she is God's creation. Therein I know the love of the divine fire whereby rational creatures are illumined. I say: as the Father made me naked and free that I might stay and make my home in the groundless ground of the innermost heart of the Godhead, even so my soul must be utterly despoiled if I am to be beatified with God. As St Paul observes, 'He who is joined to God is one spirit with him.' The Father cannot know himself without me, seeing that I stand in the ground of his eternal deity wherein his whole incomprehensible work is wrought with me and what is compre-

hended that I am. By which I mean the light of the divine Sun, the universal life-giver, therefore I see that God cannot know himself without me. 'The life was the light of men,' St John says.

Now realize the marvellous significance of this. What I say is: the life which is the light of men is man himself understanding (conceiving) himself in the wonder of the primordial power of the Father, in the leaping forth of his mysterious naught, in the blinding light of his indwelling Word brought forth in eternal creation, albeit the uncreated nature of the nameless essence. It is his nature and his wont, with perfectly receptive understanding, to take the incomprehensible essence for his own nature whereby the wonders of the negating naught are revealed to him, the night of the mind becoming bright like noon in the light of his pure primitive perfection and his distinct ineffable perfections shine out as clear as day. As David says, 'The truth shall not be hidden from thee and thy night shall be as light as day.' And as his light is so is his enlightenment for in the naked essence man knows himself even as he is known. Which knowing, our Lord said, 'I am the door of my sheep-fold.' In these words he invites us to enter by the door of his emanation and return into the source whence we came forth, for this gives promise in us of something more than is afforded by the soul's beatitude.

Haply thou wilt say, 'Good Brother, if the life is become the light of men enabling them to know themselves as they are known, is it then possible for me to know myself the very Son of God?' I answer and say, that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is so attached to the Father's nature that never for an instant does he quit the paternal mode of deity. He wrought his whole work in that nature and into that nature which gives being to all things and he did so freely, in absolute idleness, for no reason at all. Here, bound to human nature, I have to work above nature freely, in absolute idleness or motionless quiet, so as not to be hindered by myself and by my personal nature and by things which are conditioned by time and temporalities; for to know all things in the cause of their existence I must soar beyond all lights, temporal and eternal, and plunge into the causeless essence which gives mind and being to my soul. Drowned in this being, aware of self and things merely as being, my soul has lost her name and there remains no nature but that which, in the Father, is eternally in travail with the Son and as such I am a new man born in his nature and doing all I do supernaturally in the divine nature. As our Lord said, 'When I am lifted up I will draw all things after me.' So I being lifted up with all my powers into the uncreated good do be with Christ one body and with God one

spirit and do draw all things to me in one pure, perfect nature. As the gospel says, ' This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' Knowing myself none other than the Son of God, in that same sonship I am cast into my middle power and that in the perennial now, thus the eternal Word is born in me unceasingly, as our Lord says, ' Father, glorify thy Son.' In this interpretation lies the explanation of the words, ' How hardly does the rich man enter the kingdom of heaven.' Christ says in effect that the life is none other than the naked spark alight within the soul, which in the groundless Godhead knows itself none but God; to wit, the light which in rational creatures is splendid with the truth. I might give another meaning but I fear ye could not follow it.

To continue: ' The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' I make no comment here save to lament to the eternal truth what numbers fail to realize the high perfection, the deep happiness, glowing unseen within the soul. Christ says, ' Blessed be the eyes which see the things ye see.' He did not mean our bodily eyes, he meant those eyes, twin powers of the soul, set in her mind. As the gospel says, ' There was a man sent from God whose name was John.' Verily, be they male or female, these souls are John, for *John* denotes the grace of God. What is grace ? There is a power in the soul which is idle and does no work; this is none other than the image of God, not that grace is itself this image, it is its form which reforms and transfigures the soul; and in this re-formation wherein she has no form, in this transformation in which she has all forms, the omniform form, there is this quiet the soul has, she being self-contained because the truth is in her: not as hers nor as a quality. As Christ said, ' He that enjoyeth me liveth eternally.' Such an one is sent from God but is not God-forsaken. Christ says, ' He that sent me sendeth me not alone, he sendeth also every one that doeth the will of my Father.'

There are four signs to tell a man that he is sent from God. First, that in time he is superior to time and temporalities. Secondly, being therein he is detached from creatures. The third is, that he is idle or quiet-minded. The fourth is, that he is not changeable by nature. Christ said, ' I am that I am.' Possessing these a man may take it that he is sent from God and his name is John for he is the grace of God itself. Hence Paul's words, ' God is my soul's new form wherein she is formless.'

Pass on to the next. ' He came to bear witness to the light that all might believe in him.' Examine this carefully. The words are open to a purely figurative interpretation. Just as he (John) bore witness to the light of the divine unity concealed in Christ

in order that all might believe in him, so forerunning intuition tells the soul of insight into the innermost recesses of the mind where shines the spark which knows itself none other than the uncreated good of the ineffable Deity. Then the soul with all her powers acknowledges and affirms the Son eternally in the Father and eternally born of the Father who is without beginning. As Christ said, 'Whoso heareth my Word and keepeth it liveth forever.'

Now take this in another sense. I will put a question and answer it myself: What reference has this to the true light? Look you. There is a power in the soul called mind, God sent it with the soul, it is her storehouse of incorporeal forms and intellectual notions. This soul-capacity the Father fashions in his outflowing divinity whereby all the words of his divine essence flow into the word in our mind in distinction of Person just as memory pours out treasure of images into the powers of the soul. When the soul sees in this power the form of a rational creature, an angel's or her own form, the idea of the Father is clearly impressed in the soul angelically. But on penetrating deeper, into the very centre of the soul, intellect finds God there in this power face to face, and in this capacity, if she recollect herself to contemplate the vision of God in her, there wakes another power of the soul called understanding and the eternal Word is born, conceived by the soul while subsisting eternal in the Father, these two powers forming one amicable disposition which gives direction to the intellect and is its will towards its source. When the spirit is flowing from the Father and the Son into this power and into all the powers she has, the soul, oriented to God, grows cognisant of his image as her eternal prototype in God and she perceives too how the holy Trinity is sealed in her. Thus the energies of the soul all bear witness to the light of the blessed Trinity that gives light to all mankind and they acknowledge and affirm and believe in the Son born in this man without ceasing. As the gospel says, 'He was not the light but bare witness to the light.'

Mark what follows. 'That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Throw wide now the ears of understanding to catch the arcane meaning of the boundary between created and uncreated light which is plainly indicated in St John's words, 'That was the true light.' Taking the name *John* to mean the light of grace, as said above, then I propose to show what may be rightly termed 'the true light that lighteth every man,' which we receive direct.

I distinguish five lights. The first is devilish light, the second natural light, the third is angelic light, the fourth is spiritual

light, the fifth is divine light. Mark carefully how these five lights differ.

The first or devilish light leads all astray from the truth. This can be seen in cases where the outward man is not entirely in sympathy with the inward man. Supposing then that the inward man is sunk into his inner mind, where the eternal Word is born in the perennial now, the sudden shock of seeing the outward man pictured in the uncertain, fluctuating light of time, will distort the light of his understanding and stop the eternal birth from taking place. This shows it to be devilish light and it behoves you therefore to turn away from it to the peace and quiet of your higher mind. By this means Mary in her virginity, being enlightened by the Holy Ghost, contrived to shun ideas of temporal things and thus, transcending time, to harmonise her inner and her outer man into one settled calm, quite free from images, and this shows you the difference between this devilish light and the divine light.

The second light is natural light. The line of demarcation between natural light and the divine light comes where soul sees spirit direct in very truth. Thinking in natural light, in random images, human nature is changing, waxing and waning, sensible of weal and woe, as Christ shows by his death and passion. But when human nature is face to face with her proper self she is reflected into the divine nature. I ask then, does the soul in this natural light remain changeless in time? I say, no. That is a supertemporal state of union with the divine light and by the grace of God. Being drawn or caught up into the suavity of the indwelling spirit of God, the soul loves universal human nature as her own nature, as God has been loving it eternally, where this nature is set over time in the light of glory. Apart from this light, this man has the natural light of indwelling grace and at the point where he expresses the idea everything in this light of nature must needs fade away out of time, as I have said. Even so Mary was changeless by nature inasmuch as she was free from sinful accidents in the idea of her created nature wherein she knew and loved all mankind. Here ye have the difference between the light of nature in time and light of that nature beyond time in eternal glory. To me it proves that all creatures are one man, loving God by nature.

The third light is angelic light. Now you must know that every individual angel is always open to any ideas that he may choose, one more than another according to the idiosyncrasy of his angelic nature. Their stability is not impaired thereby provided they know and will and love in idleness. This uncreated understanding Lucifer had, and if Lucifer in his creaturehood had seen into the

light of nature, if his creature nature had veered round in his angelic nature to his formless divine nature, he would never have fallen from the truth. As Isaiah observes, 'The angelic light in man is the means.' In the divine light the soul is not subject to ideas nor can any shape appear to her now that she knows, with knowledge that transcends the soul's, of the incarnation of the Word. Even so Mary, aloof in absolute purity of mind and body, knew creatures as a whole in super-angelic light and her mind conceiving no form save the unformed form of God, she knew herself to be the ornament of God not fashioned in the form of any creature. Wherefore she cried, 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.'

The fourth light is spiritual light, which is moreover the medium of the light of grace in the mind. In this light of the spirit ye know how to order things in your mind with a view to the contemplation and enjoyment of the groundless essence in your soul. Absorbed therein ye are aware that the divine deep transcends the highest height of creatures. Why, I ask, was Peter oblivious of himself upon the mountain when Christ was transfigured before his three disciples? I answer, that the spiritual light of his mind was eclipsed by interior vision of the divine light: he forgot his own form on perceiving himself in this glory as the reflection ever streaming back to its paternal source. By formlessly apprehending in itself the bound Word whereto Christ knew himself united, he was taking the Christ-image for his own image. Howbeit he was not ravished into the divine light of the perfect intellect but he was caught up into the spiritual light of its reflection shining back into its actual self. Beyond this spiritual light Mary was ravished when at the annunciation she conceived the Word in the word begotten according to the love of men.

The fifth light is divine light. Therein stood Mary always, bearing her gracious child. But Christ was born of her bodily. This birth transcends all sense and reason and whoso is rapt away into this unveiled light perceives himself none other than that essence wherein God has his being, his very Godhead. An we would bear with Mary this eternal Word we must be caught up past the four lights into this fifth where we are ever giving birth to God in spirit as Mary bare him in the flesh.

To continue. 'He was in the world and the world knew him not,' *vide* what was said above anent the difference between created and uncreated light. I say, this means in the world of his providential knowledge. What time the world was in the Father as uncreated essence, his light, his flowing intellect to wit, was shining on this world-stuff wherein the world subsisted in the Father in uncreated formless simplicity. But in its first eruption

the world leaps forth manifold albeit this multiplicity is one essentially. In this eruption this world was self-luminous light.

Mark a second interpretation of the words, 'He was in the world and the world was made by him.' By this world I understand none other than the divine man. See how this divine light may be called the world. I say, man has within his soul the power of being all creatures, stones, trees and all the rest of them, and that in this same potentiality his mind has gotten the universal prototype of creatures discriminately. So within the ambit of her five senses the soul compares with rational and irrational creatures. In this sense the soul has gotten both the form and matter, the rational and irrational natures of creature generally. In this sense all things were made in man. And by the same token, before God made everything as such, hell, purgatory, everything, was God: this man is the world this light was in, this is the world that was made by him. John says, 'All things were made by him and without him was not anything made.' From which I can only gather that multitudinous man too is the world, to wit the world of darkness which comprehended not the light referred to in Christ's words, 'I am the light of the world and whoso walketh in me walketh not in darkness.' Here our Lord is inviting rational men to follow his example.

He goes on to say, 'He came into his own and his own received him not.' This refers to Christ and I apply it to the individual soul as well. He is come into his own and his own have neither known him nor accepted him. I say: whatever is found in Christ's nature is found in the highest power of the soul, therefore God is man's own, but his own is not received by him. I refer to the intellectual five senses. Clearly we have a parable of this in the woman at the well to whom Christ said, 'Show me thy husband.' The woman answered, 'I have no husband.' Christ said, 'Thou sayest truly: thou hast had five husbands and him whom thou now hast is not really thy husband.' I take it that her interests had lain in her five senses. Christ's words, 'him whom thou now hast is not really thy husband,' I interpret to mean that she was neglecting the intellect she had so it was no true man to her. When God comes sensibly to the soul, which is his own, he is received by what is not his own, to wit the outward senses and inward faculties of the soul. When God is conceived by the soul insensibly then we can say, 'our abode is in heaven.' This passage is clear in the light of the foregoing.

I Brother John, propound two questions. They concern the statement, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become God's sons, even to them that believe in his name.' I ask in the first place, does the power to become God's sons lie

with us or with God? In the second I ask, what name do we believe in? My answers are briefly as follows.

To start with it must be borne in mind that God is without will, without love, without justice, without mercy, nay without divinity or anything we can ascribe to him or predicate of him or attribute to him (for any good attributed to God or predicated of him simply reduces God to naught), so it is with the soul that lies the power, the ability to make this her own will; in her real will she is incapable of stooping to anything opposed to the nature of that will, and at the point where God and spirit vanish, in that same point I am the Son of God, begotten of God eternally according to Christ's words, 'I am the only-begotten Son of God,' for I am free from self in all creaturehood. Where I am God is and where God is I am and our joint love is God and he who dwells in this love dwells in God and God in him. Then mine is the highest angel God has in heaven, as much as he is God's, by whose power and by whose might we make ourselves God's sons, for he empowers us with himself, penetrating the will of the soul even as Father and Son permeate their common Spirit. That is the answer to the first question to the best of my knowledge at present.

Now to answer the second question: What divine name do we believe in? That is written in the gospel in Christ's words, 'Father, this is eternity or eternal life, to believe in thee the true God, *i.e.* truly as God.' Truth is God, and love, as truly as God is God. If God is free from names then, I durst not think I have the name of Henry nor of Conrad nor of Ulric for by adding anything to God I block him with an idol; but he who believes in the name of God rejoices in the universal name, to wit the divine name which we believe in. In this unfathomable light of faith, faith makes us of multitudinous knowledge ignorant, of multitudinous will without volition, in multitudinous form unshapen. And so with the prophet, 'I say, ye are Gods.' Believing in the name of God we are God's sons. If anyone is able to give a better answer to these two questions I would fain hear it.

(He goes on to say, 'Which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man') for flesh and blood and human will unconquered cannot possess the kingdom of heaven till they are born again in God. This is quite clear, the meaning is patent to all. But I desire to speak briefly on the subject of manhood.

I say: the highest power of the soul is the man, her will namely, which always stands bare and uncovered. The second power is intellect, the woman, who is always veiled, and the lower is raised up to the higher. Now when the power we call the man, *i.e.* the will, is joined to the power we called the woman, the intellect,

that is to say, then the woman brings forth fruit in the perennial now. When the male is parted from the female power man's will is wavering in false light. The apostle truly says, 'the Word was made flesh.' The manhood of Christ as seeing in[to God] has a reflection in the Father's personal nature. In the groundless substance of the Godhead human nature stands perfectly steady, gazing down in the transcendent light for love of creatures. Thus divine and human nature are atoned in human nature. And by the same token, even if Adam had not fallen yet would Christ have been made man by reason of the love proceeding which is ever being born in eternity in the divine nature and was bound to become man in Christ owing to the idiosyncrasy of that nature which flowed for aye out of the groundless ground of God. The smallest spark falling from out the least and lowest of the angels would illuminate and outshine this world and it would dim the brightest lights of human and angelic nature did it shine next to God. So Christ restores human nature not angelic nature. As his divinity lay hid in his humanity when 'the Word was made flesh' in him, so let us hide our human nature in his divine nature in that same Word which was incarnate. By living the Christ life more than my own life I am Christ rather than myself and my proper name is Christ rather than James or John, and so this befall beyond time I am changed into God.

Now listen to another meaning, the incarnation of the Word in the sacrament. Just as he made his body in the sacrament by word and knowledge and took and gave it to his disciples idly, without motion or passion, that is to say, nor was this sacrament consummated by knowledge alone but by words as well, even so I observe that in the highest power of the soul, corresponding to the Father-nature, intellect begat itself in the image of Divinity to smite into this Word as perfect will and in the groundless love of this same will the Holy Ghost was gotten in the Word with this same intellect. And still this birth is ever going on in the sacrament to those who are Christ properly so called: these people are true priests and in the truth, for their going is above the angels and they are not to be touched by temporal things. As Christ said to Mary Magdalene, 'Touch me not for I am risen,' so verily these souls are risen with Christ. God gives himself freely, idly, as he gave himself to his disciples in token of the love which works the same in us, and those who take this sacrament as freely and resignedly and unselfhindered, do receive it as really as the giver gives it and he who takes it otherwise does not wholly and solely resign him to the truth. When in the sacrament I receive God from God thus supersacramentally, I am actually changed into the same that I receive, thus the Word is made

flesh and dwells among us mystically and wherever this is realized there is the proof of the divine spark, moreover I make bold to say, were anyone prepared for outward food as for the sacrament he would receive God as much as in the sacrament; which is to many people a hard saying albeit quite consistent with the truth, for the gift prepares for its own reception and I should be the thing prepared for that which has prepared me. St John says, 'We have his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.' From which I gather that anyone who knows the joys of the divine life is shining within and without like the only Son of God, as St Paul says, 'I live not but Christ liveth in me in his love.'

Consider what is meant by sons of God and children of God. To be God's children in the sense that he created us is not enough. For instance. If I paint my likeness on the wall, he who sees the likeness is not seeing me; but anyone who sees me sees my likeness and not my likeness merely but my child. If I really knew my soul, anyone who saw my conception of it would say it was my son for I share therewith my energy and nature, and as here so is it in the Godhead. The Father understands himself perfectly clearly so there appears to him his image, that is to say, his Son. The Father is light, the Son is light and image and the Holy Ghost also is light and image and inasmuch as the Father imagines (or conceives) his Son he is called Son and inasmuch as he endows him with his nature he is called his child. Likewise that man is the image of God who, being detached from things, is living as spirit in the spirit of God and such have glory and honour as the only Son of God full of grace and truth of the reflection of God, and really containing and possessing God in them; thus the kingdom of God is within us.

Here endeth the Commentary on this Gospel.

XIX[1]

THE BEATIFIC VISION

King David said: 'Lord in thy light shall we see light.' Doctors debate as to the medium in which we shall see God. The common doctrine is that it will be in the light of glory. But this solution appears to me to be unsound and untenable. From time to time I have explained that man has within him a light called the active intellect: this is the light in which man will see God in bliss, so they seek to prove. Now man according to his creaturely nature is in great imperfection and is unable by nature

[1] See Preger, *Geschichte der deutschen Mystiker*, vol. i, p. 484.

to discern God otherwise than as creatures do, by images and forms, as I have elsewhere demonstrated. The soul is unable of herself and by her own innate power to transcend this state ; that must happen in some supernatural power such as the light of grace. Mark this solution which I will now proceed to discuss.

St Paul says : ' By God's grace I am that I am.' He does not say that he is ' of grace.' There is a difference between being by grace and being grace itself. Doctors declare that form gives being to matter. Now there are various definitions of grace current among them. But I say grace is nothing else than the flowing light proceeding direct from God's nature into the soul : a supernatural form of the soul which gives her a supernatural nature. This is what I had in mind when I stated that the soul was unable of herself to transcend her own natural activity ; this she can do in the power of grace which endows her with a supernatural nature.

Observe, grace effects nothing by itself. Moreover it exalts the soul above activity. Grace is bestowed in the essence of the soul and is received into her powers ; for if the soul is to effect anything in this matter, she must needs have grace by virtue of which to transcend her own activities such as knowing and loving. Whilst the soul is in process of taking this transcendental flight out of herself into the nothingness of herself and her own activity, she is ' by grace ' ; she is grace when she has accomplished this transcendental passage and has overcome herself and now stands in her pure virginity alone, conscious of nothing but of behaving after the manner of God. As God lives, while the soul is still capable of knowing and acting after the manner of her creatureliness and as a child of nature, she has not become grace itself though she may well be by grace. For to be grace itself the soul must be as destitute of activity, inward and outward, as grace is, which knows no activity. St John says : ' To us is given grace for grace,' for to become grace by grace is the work of grace. The supreme function of grace is to reduce the soul to what it is itself. Grace robs the soul of her own activity ; grace robs the soul of her own nature. In this supernatural flight the soul transcends her natural light which is a creature and comes into immediate touch with God.

Now I would have you understand me. I am going to give an explanation I have never given before. The worthy Dionysius says : ' When God exists not for the spirit there exists not for it either the eternal image, its eternal origin.' I have said before and say again that God has wrought one act eternally in which act he made the soul in his own [likeness], and out of which act and by means of which act the soul issued forth into her created

existence, becoming unlike God and estranged from her own prototype, and in her creation she made God, who was not before the soul was made. At various times I have declared: I am the cause that God is God. God is gotten of the soul, his Godhead of himself; before creatures were, God was not God albeit he was Godhead which he gets not from the soul. Now when God finds a naughted soul whose self and whose activity have been brought to naught by means of grace, God works his eternal work in her above grace, raising her out of her created nature. Here God naughts himself in the soul and then neither God nor soul is left. Be sure that this is God indeed. When the soul is capable of conceiving God's work she is in the state of no longer having any God at all; the soul is then the eternal image as which God has always seen her, his eternal Word. When, therefore, St Dionysius says that God no longer exists for the spirit, he means what I have just explained.

Now it may be asked whether the soul as here seen in the guise of the eternal image is the light meant by David wherein we shall see eternal light?

We answer, no. Not in this light will the soul see the eternal light that shall beatify her; for, says the worthy Dionysius, 'neither will the eternal image exist for the spirit.' What he means is that, when the spirit has accomplished its transcendental flight, its creaturely nature is brought to naught, whereby it loses God as I have already explained, and then the soul, in the eternal image, breaks through the eternal image into the essential image of the Father. Thus saith the Scriptures: 'Everything flows back in the soul into the Father who is the beginning of the eternal Word and of all creatures.'

It may be questioned whether this is the light, the Father namely, in which the spirit sees the eternal light?

I answer, no. Now mark my words. God works and has created all things; the Godhead does not work, it knows nothing of creation. In my eternal prototype the soul is God for there God works and my soul has equality with the Father, for my eternal prototype, which is the Son in the Godhead, is in all respects equal with the Father. One scripture says: 'Naught is equal with God; to be equal with God, then, the soul must be naught.' That interpretation is just. We would say, however: where there is equality there is no unity for *equal* is a privation of unity; and where there is unity there is no equality for equality resides in multiplicity and separation. Where there is equality there cannot be unity. I am not equal to myself. I am the same as myself. Hence the Son in the Godhead, inasmuch as he is Son, is equal with the Father but he is not one with the Father. There

is no equality where Father and Son are one ; that is, in the unity of the divine essence. In this unity the Father knows no Son nor does the Son know any Father, for there there is neither Father nor Son nor Holy Ghost. When the soul enters into the Son, her eternal prototype wherein she is equal with the Father, then, breaking through her eternal prototype, she, with the Son, transcends equality and possesses unity with the three Persons in the unity of the essence. David says : ' Lord in thy light shall we see light,' that is : in the light of the impartible divine essence shall we see the divine essence and the whole perfection of the divine essence as revealed in the variety of the Persons and the unity of their nature. St Paul says : ' We shall be changed from one brightness into the other and shall become like unto him,' meaning : we shall be changed from created light into the uncreated splendour of the divine nature and shall become like it ; that is, we shall be that it is.

St John says : ' All things live in him.' In that the Father contemplates the Son all creatures take living shape in the Son, that being the real life of creatures. But in another passage St John says : ' Blessed are the dead that have died in God.'—It seems passing strange that it should be possible to die in him who himself said that he is the life !—But see : the soul, breaking through her eternal prototype, is plunged in the absolute nothingness of her eternal prototype. This is the death of the spirit ; for dying is nothing but deprivation of life. When the soul realizes that any thing throws her eternal prototype into separation and negation of unity, the spirit puts its own self to death to its eternal prototype, and breaking through its eternal prototype remains in the unity of the divine nature. These are the blessed dead that are dead in God. No one can be buried and beatified in the Godhead who has not died to God, that is, in his eternal prototype, as I have explained.

Our creed says : *Christ rose from the dead* : Christ rose out of God into the Godhead, into the unity of the divine essence. That is to say that Christ's soul and all rational souls, being dead to their exemplar, rise from that divine death to taste the joys above it, namely the riches of the divine nature wherein the spirit is beatified.

Now consider the fact of happiness. God is happy in himself ; and all creatures, which God must make happy, will be so in the same happiness that God is happy in, and after the same fashion that he is happy. Be sure that in this unity the spirit transcends every mode, even its own eternal being, and everything created as well as the equality which, in the eternal image, it has with the Father, and together with the Father soars up into the

unity of the divine nature where God conceives himself in absolute simplicity. There, in that act, the spirit is no longer creature, it is the same as happiness itself, the nature and substance of the Godhead, the beatitude of its own self and of all creatures. Further, I hold that if God did what he is impotent to do, granted the soul while still a creature the knowledge and enjoyment of actual beatitude, then, were the soul to be and to remain happy, it were impossible for God to remain God. Anyone in heaven knowing the saints according to their happiness, would not have anything to say of any saint but only of God ; for happiness is God and all those who are happy are, in the act of happiness, God and the divine nature and substance of God. St Paul says : ' He who being naught, thinketh himself aught, deceiveth himself.' In the act of happiness he is brought to naught and no creaturehood exists for him. As the worthy Dionysius says : ' Lord lead me to where thou art a nothingness,' meaning : lead me, Lord, to where thou transcendest every created intellect ; for as St Paul declares : ' God dwells in a light that no man can approach unto ' ; that is : God is not to be discerned in any created light whatever.

St Dionysius says : ' God is nothing,' and this is also implied by St Augustine when he says : ' God is everything,' meaning : nothing is God's. So that by saying ' God is nothing ' Dionysius signifies that there is no thing in his presence. It follows that the spirit must advance beyond things and thingliness, shape and shapenness, existence and existences : then will dawn in it the actuality of happiness which is the essential possession of the actual intellect.

I have sometimes said that man sees God in this life in the same perfection and is happy in the same perfect fashion as in the life to come. Many people are astonished at this. Let us try therefore to understand what it means. Real intellect emanates from the eternal truth as intelligence and contains in itself intelligibly all that God contains. This noble divinity, the active intellect, conceives itself in itself after the manner of God in its emanation, and in its essential content it is downright God ; but it is creature according to the motion of its nature. This intellect is to the full as noble in us now as in the after life.

Now the question may be asked : How then does this life differ from the life to come ?

I answer that, this intellect which is happy in exactly the same way as God is, is at present latent in us. In this life we know God only according to potentiality. In the after life, when we are quit of body, our potentiality will be all transfigured into the act of happiness which belongs to the active intellect. This transfiguration will render the fact of happiness no more perfect than it

is now; for active intellect has no accidents nor any capacity to receive more than it contains innately. It follows that when we are beatified we shall be completely deprived of potentiality and shall conceive happiness only actually, after the manner of the divine nature. As David says: 'Lord in thy light shall we see light': with the divine nature we shall conceive the perfection of the divine nature, which alone is our entire felicity, here in grace and there in perfect happiness.

III

SAYINGS

1

THIS IS MEISTER ECKHART FROM WHOM GOD NOTHING HID

Meister Eckhart said in a sermon, The work wrought by God in the God-loving soul which he finds empty and detached enough for him to bring himself to spiritual birth in her, this work, he said, gives God greater pleasure than any work he ever did with any creature and is far nobler than the creation of all things from nothing.

On being asked the reason why this work gives God such pleasure, he said it was because God has no creature but the soul of large enough capacity for him to empty his entire might, the whole ground of his being in, as he does in this act of begetting himself ghostly in the soul.

When asked what God's birth is, he said, God's being born within the soul is nothing else than God's self-revelation to the soul in some new knowledge and in some new mode.

Anon they asked him, Does the soul's chief happiness consist in this act whereby God gets himself in her in ghostly fashion? Quoth he, Though it is true that God takes greater pleasure in this act than in any other deed he ever did concerning creature, natheless the soul is happier being re-born into God. God being born in her makes her not wholly blessed: she is beatified when, in love and praise, she follows this wisdom whereinto she is born, back to the source from whence it came and in their common origin, holding to what is his lets go her own, she being happy not in hers but his.

2

Meister Eckhart said, A man of godly love and godly fear and perfect faith may, an he will, receive God's body every day at the priest's hands.

3

The question is, what does God do in heaven? The answer given by the saint is this, He crowns his own work: the works God crowns his saints for he wrought in them himself.

Meister Eckhart says, I have been asked what God is doing in heaven ? I answer, He has been giving his Son birth eternally, is giving him birth now and will go on giving him birth for ever, the Father being in childbed in every virtuous soul. Blessed, thrice blessed is the man within whose soul the heavenly Father is thus brought to bed. All she surrenders to him here she shall enjoy from him in life eternal. God made the soul on purpose for her to bear his one-begotten Son. His birth in Mary ghostly was to God better pleasing than his nativity of her in flesh. When this birth happens nowadays in the good loving soul it gives God greater pleasure than his creation of the heavens and earth.

4

Meister Eckhart says, He who is everywhere at home is God-worthy ; to him who is ever the same is God present and in him in whom creatures are stilled God bears his one-begotten Son.

5

Meister Eckhart says, Holy scripture cries aloud for freedom from self. Self-free is self-controlled and self-controlled is self-possessed and self-possession is God-possession and possession of everything God ever made. I tell thee, as true as God is God and I a man, wert thou quite free from self, free from the highest angel, then were the highest angel thine as well as thine own self. This method gives self-mastery.

6

According to Meister Eckhart, Grace comes not otherwise than with the Holy Ghost. It bears the Holy Ghost upon its back. Grace is no stationary thing, it is ever-becoming. It is flowing straight out of God's heart. Grace does nothing but re-form and convey into God. Grace makes the soul deiform. God, the ground of the soul and grace go together.

7

Query, does God pour his grace into a power of the soul or into her essence, for no creature is allowed in the essence of the soul ? The answer is that grace is a matter of the soul and naught beside and grace without soul is not grace at all. It is immaterial for it is not true creature, it is creaturely. Grace to be grace must have the soul for substance for if God poured his grace into a power of the soul that power alone would benefit. Not so : he instils it into her essence and essence works by grace in all her powers.

8

Meister Eckhart says, Practice is better than precept ; but the practice and precept of eternal God is a counsel of perfection. If I wanted a teacher of theology I should go for one to Paris, to its learned university. But if I came to ask about the perfect life, why then he could not tell me. Where then am I to turn ? To pure and abstract nature, nowhere else : that can solve thy anxious queries. Why, good people, search among dead bones ? Why not seek the living sacrum that gives eternal life ? The dead give not nor do they take. An angel seeking God as God would look not anywhere for him except in a quiet, solitary creature. The essence of perfection lies in bearing poverty, misery, despisery, adversity and every hardship that befalls, willingly, gladly, freely, eagerly, calm and unmoved and persisting unto death without a why.

9

Meister Eckhart said, Whate'er it be that lights devotion in man's heart and knits him closest unto God, that is the best thing for him here in time.

Again he says, To be the heavenly Father's Son one has to be a stranger to the world, remote from self, heartwhole and having the mind purified.

O man, renounce thyself and so with toil-free virtue win the prize or, cleaving to thyself, with toilful virtues lose it.

10

Meister Eckhart says, He who is ever alone is Godworthy and to him who is ever at home is God present and in him who stands ever in the present now does God the Father bear his Son unceasingly.

11

Meister Eckhart says, He to whom (God) is different in one thing from another and to whom God is dearer in one thing than another, that man is a barbarian, still in the wilds, a child. He to whom God is the same in everything has come to man's estate. But he to whom creatures all mean want and exile has come into his own.

He was also asked : Does the man who goes out of himself need to trouble at all about his nature ? He answered, God's yoke is easy and his burden is light : No, only about his will ; what the tyro fears is the expert's delight. The kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead.

12

God's every infliction is a lure. I give no thanks to God for loving me because he cannot help it, it is his nature to; what I do thank him for is that he cannot of his goodness leave off loving me.

13

The highest the soul can get to in this life is a settled habitation without all in all. Being without all means being detached, perfectly free from self and things. Being in all means a state of perpetual rest: poise in her eternal idea, in the omniform image shining impartible.

14

Eckhart said, There are people upon earth that bear our Lord in spirit as his mother did in flesh.

They asked him who these were? He answered, They being free from things do see in the mirror of truth whereto they are gotten all unknowing; on earth, their dwelling is in heaven and they are at peace: they go as little children.

15

Meister Eckhart said, Better to my mind is the man who in the cause of charity will lend himself to taking dole of bread than he who gives an hundred marks for charity. How do I make that out? I argue thus. Doctors agree that honour is of far more worth than temporal goods. Now he who gives an hundred marks for charity gets back in praise and honour more than his hundred marks' worth. The hand he stretches forth with gifts collects both more and better than it gave. But the beggar reaching out his hand for bread is bartering his honour; the giver buys honour but the taker sells it.

Another thing advantages the beggar who receives over the donor of the hundred marks to God: the giver glories in and gratifies his nature, the beggar is subduing his and flouting it; the giver is made much of for his gifts, the beggar scorned and shunned for taking them.

16

Meister Eckhart said, I never ask God to give himself to me: I beg of him to purify, to empty, me. If I am empty, God of his very nature is obliged to give himself to me to fill me.

How to be pure? By steadfast longing for the one good, God to wit. How to acquire this longing? By self-denial and dislike to creatures; self-knowledge is the way for creatures are all naught, they come to naught with lamentation and bitterness.

God being in himself pure good can nowhere dwell except in the pure soul: he overflows into her, whole he flows into her. What does emptiness mean? It means a turning from creatures: the heart uplifted to the perfect good so that creatures are no comfort nor is there any want of them save inasmuch as the perfect good, God namely, is to be grasped therein. The clear eye tolerates the mote no more than does the pure soul aught that clouds, that comes between. Creatures as she enjoys them are all pure for she enjoys creatures in God and God in creatures. She is so limpid she sees through herself; nor is God far to seek: she finds him in herself when in her natural purity she flows into the supernatural pure Godhead where she is in God and God in her and what she does she does in God and God does it in her.

17

Meister Eckhart said, To die the death in love and knowledge, that is more noble and more worth than all the good works put together that holy Christendom has done in love and knowledge from its beginning until now and ever shall do till the judgment day. These do but serve to bring this death about, this death wherein springs life eternal.

18

Meister Eckhart says, We fail to get our way with God because we lack two things: profound humility and a telling will. Upon my life I swear that God in his divinity is capable of all things but this he cannot do, he cannot leave unsatisfied the soul with these two things. Wherefore vex not yourselves with trivialities; ye were not made for trivial things and the glory of the world is but a travesty of truth, only a heresy of happiness.

19

Meister Eckhart being questioned as to God's greatest gift to him answered, There are three. First, cessation of carnal desires and pleasures. Secondly, divine light enlightens me in everything I do. Thirdly, daily I grow and am renewed in virtue, grace and happiness.

20

Meister Eckhart says, Lofty aim is lofty nature. The vision of God is a high endeavour. I say, God is omnipotent, but he is powerless to thwart the man of meek and mighty aspiration, and any failure on my side to get my way with God is due to lack either of will or meekness.

21

Meister Eckhart says, As a man gets to be like God and God gets dear enough for him to disregard himself and not seek what is his in time or in eternity, he is released from all his sins and purgatorial pains, yea though he have committed every sin on earth. And this life is attainable while yet he eats and drinks. Further he declares, To be the heavenly Father's Son we must be strangers to the world, remote from self, pure-hearted, inward minded.

22

On one occasion Brother Eckhart said, Five things there be which in whomsoever has them are sure sign that he will never lapse from God. First, though most grievous things befall this man from God or creature, never a murmur does he make: no word but praise and thanks is ever heard. Again, at the most trying times he never says one word in his excuse. Thirdly, this man desires of God what God will freely give and nothing else: he leaves it all to him. Fourthly, nothing in heaven or earth can ruffle him: so settled is his calm that heaven and earth in topsy-turveydom would leave him quite content in God. Fifth, nothing in heaven or earth can cheer him; for having reached the point where naught in heaven or earth can sadden him so neither can it gladden him, except as trifles can.

A man remote and far from his own self as the chief angel of the Seraphim from him, would have that angel for his own as he is God's and God is his. And that is the bare truth, as God is God.

St Paul says: 'The whole world is the cross to me and I the cross to you.'

24

Said Meister Eckhart the preacher, There is no greater valour nor no sterner fight than that for self-effacement, self-oblivion.

25

Brother Eckhart said, Not all suffering is rewarded; only what is cheerfully consented to. A man hanged on the gallows, suffering unwillingly, were better pleased that it had been another. There is no reward for that. Other sufferings the same. It is not the suffering that counts, it is the virtue.—I say, to him who suffers not for love to suffer is suffering and is hard to bear. But one who suffers for love suffers not and his suffering is fruitful in God's sight.

26

According to Meister Eckhart, Every sign, every holiness, every perfection possible to creature our Lady had par excellence. To take her holiness, it was so prodigious that our Lady never sinned. Of signs, again, she had the chief one, that of being God's mother; albeit our theologians do contend that our Lady was far happier uniting God to Godhead than she was in giving carnal birth to God. As to the overfullness our Lady got from deity, she was worthy of it, bearing as she did God in the flesh. Soul overbrimming like this overflows into the body and makes the body like it, thus she was God's carnal mother. Accordingly some doctors do affirm that mental concepts tell upon the body more than physicians do with all their drugs. God is never born except in souls which have put creatures under their feet. Our philosophers say, Perfect rest is freedom from all motion.

27

On St Peter's words, 'We have abandoned all things,' Meister Eckhart comments thus: Thou hast well said, for laden thou couldst not follow him. It is no profitless exchange, giving up all for God: by him all things are given and having gotten him he stands in lieu of all.

28

Meister Eckhart said, What our Lord did was done with this intent, and this alone, that he might be with us and we with him.

29

Brother Eckhart preached saying, St Peter said, 'We have left all things.' St James said, 'We have given up all things.' St John said, 'We have nothing left.' Whereupon Brother Eckhart asks, When do we leave all things? When we leave everything conceivable, everything expressible, everything audible, everything visible, then and then only we give up all things. When in this sense we give up all we grow aflood with light, passing bright with God.

30

He that would be what he ought must stop being what he is. When God made the angels the first sight they saw was that of the Father with the Son sprouting out of his Father's heart like a green shoot out of a tree. This blissful vision they have had more than six thousand years and how it comes they wot as well

to-day as when they were first made. This owing to their keen perception : the more we know the less we understand.

31

In the Book of Wisdom it is writ, ' All men are fools in whom is no knowledge of God for men are mortal without God.' Without divine wisdom we are without God and to be without God is to be without truth for God it is who inculcates the truth. Not being in God means being in lies and without wisdom. One may be worldly-wise without being Godly-wise but this is folly in God's sight : wisdom wisdomless, more foolishness than wisdom. The question is, who has this heavenly wisdom ? Meister Eckhart says, He who in deep and real humility so yields himself to God that his will is wholly God's will and God's will is his, as saith Isaiah the prophet, ' God teaches true wisdom to none but the humble.' And in the Book of Wisdom too we read, ' Where there is meekness there is true wisdom.' Also the heathen doctor Ptolemeus says, ' Among wise men the humblest are the wisest.' According to Meister Eckhart, with humility goes love : lowliness without love is dead indeed for the virtues are virtue in virtue of love.

32

—' And so shall a man order his life if he would be perfect.' Anent this Meister Eckhart says, Works wrought from within are pleasant both to God and man ; they are benign and living works. They are Godworthy for he alone it is who does in man works wrought from within, as saith the prophet Isaiah, ' Lord all our works thou hast wrought in us,' and Christ too said, ' My Father who is in me he doeth that I do.' Such works are both easy and pleasant to man for all deeds are agreeable and pleasant to man in which body and soul are harmonious. This is the case in all these works. Again, these works are living works : the dead beast differs from the living one in that the dead is moved from outside only ; it must be pulled or pushed, to wit, and its works are all dead works. The live beast moves itself where'er it will ; its motive power is within and its works are living works. In the same way those works of men which have their source within where God moves by himself, essential products, these are our works, divine works, useful works. But works which come from some external cause and not from inner being, these works I say are dead, they are not godly works nor are they ours. Meister Eckhart also says, Works wrought from within are willing works. But that which is willing is sweet, therefore works from within are all pleasant whereas works due to any outward cause are

unwilling and slavish for were there nothing moving from without no work were done at all, so that it is reluctant, menial, bitter.

33

Meister Eckhart said, No person can in this life reach the point at which he is excused from outward works. What though one lead the contemplative life, one cannot altogether keep from flowing out and mingling in the life of action. Even as a man without a groat may still be generous in the will to give, whereas a man of means in giving nothing cannot be called generous, so no one can have virtues without exercising virtue at the proper time and place. Hence those who lead the contemplative life and do no outward works, are most mistaken and all on the wrong tack. What I say is that he who lives the contemplative life may, nay he must, be absolutely free from outward works what time he is in act of contemplation but afterwards his duty lies in doing outward works ; for none can live the contemplative life without a break and active life bridges the gaps in the life of contemplation.

34

Meister Eckhart says and so do other masters, that there are two things in God : essence and regard, *i.e. relatio.* According to these doctors, not in the Godhead does the Father bear his Son ; the Father in his essence does but see into his naked essence where he discerns himself in all his power : himself by himself, without the Son and without the Holy Ghost ; naught sees he there but the unity of his own essence. But the Father being minded to regard himself, to reflect upon himself in another Person, by this act of retrospection is begetting his Son ; and being well contented with himself in this regard and finding his reflection most delightful he must, since all joy is his eternally, keep on looking back eternally. So the Son is as eternal as the Father, and from the mutual liking and the love betwixt the Father and the Son there comes the Holy Ghost and since this love between the Father and the Son has been for aye therefore the Holy Ghost is as eternal as the Father and the Son and these three Persons have one simple essence and are distinct as Persons only : the Father's Person never was the Son's nor the Holy Ghost's Person ; all three have each their own Person albeit they are one in essence.

35

Meister Eckhart says and so do other masters, No man has any merit apart from his intention and the why of a man's action

gives the measure of his merit, naught beside. Hence anyone intending, anyone striving, for something less than God is not worthy of God unless as the lover of creature, whatever it be, in God. God-lovers have no guerdon but God; them God rewards with himself.

36

Meister Eckhart says, and so do other masters, that in the course of nature it is really the higher which is ever more ready to pour its power out into the lower than the lower is ready to receive it. The highest heaven, for instance, is turning far more rapidly than the rest which run against it. However fast the lower heavens race against the upper, in order to receive the influx from it, the highest heaven will go harder still both as to pace and influx. So God is vastly quicker to pour out his grace than man to take it in. There is no dearth of God with us; what dearth there is is wholly ours who make not ready to receive his grace.

37

The question is, When do the passions perforce obey the mind? The answer Meister Eckhart gives is this. What time the mind is fixed on God and there abides, the senses are obedient to the mind. As one should hang a needle to a magnet and then another needle on to that, until there are four needles, say, depending from the magnet. As long as the first needle stays clinging to the magnet all the other needles will keep clinging on to that but when the leader drops the rest will go as well. So, while the mind keeps fixed on God the senses are subservient to it but if the mind should wander off from God the passions will escape and be unruly.

38

Why is it, Meister Eckhart asks, that people are so slow to look for God in earnest? His comment is: When one is looking for a thing and finds no trace of its existence one hunts half-heartedly and in distress. But lighting on some vestige of the quarry, the chase grows lively, blithe and keen. The man in quest of fire, cheered when he feels the heat looks for its source with eagerness and pleasure. And so it is with those in quest of God: feeling none of the sweetness of God they grow listless but sensing the sweetness of divinity they blithely pursue their search for God.

39

Meister Eckhart asks, Whose are the prayers God always hears? And Meister Eckhart answers, Who worships God as God God hears.

But he who worships God for worldly goods, worships not God: he worships what he worships God for and employs God as his servant for the getting of it. As St Augustine puts it, 'What thou dost love thou dost worship; true prayer, real prayer is nothing but loving: what one loves that one prays to. Hence no one prays to God aright but he that prays to God for God without a thought of aught but God.

40

Meister Eckhart says and so do other masters, Whoso wants a virtue ought to seek it at the source, in God to wit, where we find all the virtues added up to virtue. The man who finds a single virtue thus discovers every virtue in the one and, attaining to the unity where all virtues are virtue, the soul sees God and God looks on the soul. Soul is caressed by God who, talking with her in familiar fashion, teaches her universal wisdom and God and man now fully reconciled, man is the lord of every creature, of all the good things that have flowed from God; as it is written in the Book of Wisdom where the wise man says, 'All good have I gotten in thee alone': in virtue have I gotten all the virtues.

41

According to Meister Eckhart, God is not only the Father of all good things but he is the mother of all things to boot. He is Father for he is the cause of all things and their creator. He is the mother of all things as well, for when creatures have gotten their being from him he still stays with creatures to keep them in being. If God did not remain with creatures after they had started their own life they would most speedily fall out of being. Falling from God means falling from being into nothingness. It is not so with other causes, they can with safety quit the things they cause when these have gotten being of their own. When the house is in being its builder can depart and for the reason that it is not the builder alone that makes the house: the materials thereof he draws from nature. But God provides creature with the whole of what it is, with form as well as matter, so he is bound to stay with it or it will promptly drop out of existence.

42

Meister Eckhart says, the man who doing some good deed does it not wholly for God's sake and without any thought save God, that man darkens God's glory. All good works are God's. Hence if a man in his good work harbours intent towards aught but God

he gives thereto the honour of the work and robs God of his glory and all such works are sterile and unfruitful.

43

The question is, Does the virtue of prayer increase with the outward practice of it? Meister Eckhart says that the external habit adds little or nothing to the value of prayer. Prayer is a good thing in itself. Now a thing that is good in virtue of its muchness is not good in virtue of itself. One groat has little value all alone but if thou hadst a thousand groats that were a handsome property, solely by reason of the number. Groats have small value in themselves apart from number. And so it is with outward practices: number adds little to the good of prayer; one *Ave* coming freely from the heart has greater power and virtue than a thousand from the lips. And by the same token, no virtue dwells in number of good works; virtue is every whit as fine, as good, in one least act of virtue rightly done as in a thousand. Virtue is not enhanced by multiplying outward acts of virtue, for were it good from number it would not then be good in its own right. A thing good in itself is good in its oneness not in its multiplication. True virtue means virtuous works wrought virtuously. Who gives an alms in God's name but gives it grudgingly and not with cheerful heart, what though he do a virtuous deed, he does not do it virtuously. And so with prayer or any other virtue: done rightly it is virtue but not else. Take patience for example. External suffering does not make one patient: it merely tries one's patience, as fire will try a penny whether it be of silver or of copper. The patient man is patient still though outward suffering n'er befall. And prayer the same. The man of pure heart Godward turned who never does a stroke of outward work is natheless in good case for hearts are not made pure by outward prayers: prayer rises pure from out pure hearts.

44

Doctors declare that God moves all things, *i.e.* all creatures, but creatures cannot move God. God can move creatures for he has created all creatures and it is he who keeps them in existence. But creatures cannot move God: no creature can affect God, according to the universal law that the lower does not flow into the higher. Now creatures are inferior to God so they do not influence God, ergo, they do not move God.

In this connection some enquirers ask how God can move creatures and not be defiled by creatures which are full of fault? The masters answer, If, as we see, the sun can shine on mire and

filth without contamination then how much more can God protect himself from any taint of creature. But Meister Eckhart argues in a different fashion. He says God is in all things but so as to be wholly outside things, hence faults in creatures will not affect God. Just as we see the soul whole in the eye and at the same time whole outside the eye for she is whole in every limb; no blemish of the eye can touch the soul which is in suchwise wholly in the eye as to be independent of the eye. Even so God in creature is wholly without creature, untouched and untainted by creature.

There is another answer Meister Eckhart gives: God is only in the essence (or being) of a creature. His argument runs thus. Essence is without defect, defect being nothing but a lapse from being. Now seeing no defect can touch the essence and God is only in the essence of a creature therefore God is unaffected by the defects of creature. Regarding this amazing fact of deity John Chrysostom observes: 'That God is in all creatures we know and declare but how and in what manner we do not understand.' Yet Meister Eckhart says it is quite plain if for the word *God* we put the word *being*. We see and have abundant proof that being is in all things. But if actual being is God it follows then that God must be in all things.

45

Thus saith the wise man in the Book of Wisdom, 'Eternal wisdom is omnipotent for it is one.' Upon which Meister Eckhart comments thus. The simpler a thing is the more powerful and effective it is. We can demonstrate it thus. In a thing made of parts the power of the thing resides in its parts. In a house made of walls, foundations and roof, the whole force of the house consists in these parts. If the house could but draw from its oneness the virtue it gets from its walls then it need have no walls. Now God is the simplest possible good wherein all things are one and as one he is therefore omnipotent. Again, the heathen doctors say that power dispersed is dissipated. It is so with the mind. Scattered in multitudinous creature it is so much more feeble and infirm toward God. But when the mind gets rid of creatures, when all the senses vanish into mind, then mind and passions being met in one the mind is strong enough to wrest from God whatever it desires. When man does what is in him not even God can say him nay.

46

In one of his sermons Meister Eckhart said, It is my humility that gives God his divinity and the proof of it is this. God's peculiar property is giving. But God cannot give if he has nothing to receive his gifts. Now I make myself receptive to his gifts by

my humility so I by my humility do make God giver and since giving is God's own peculiar property I do by my humility give God his property. The would-be giver must needs find a taker; without a taker he cannot be a giver for it is the taker by his taking that makes the man a giver. So God, to be the giver, must discover a receiver. Now none but the humble can receive the gift of God. So God, to use his godlike power of giving, will eke need my humility; without humility he cannot give me aught for I without humility cannot accept his gift. Thus it is true that I by my humility do give God his divinity.

47

Meister Eckhart also said, My lowliness raises up God and the lower I humble myself the higher do I exalt God and the higher I do exalt God the more gently and sweetly he pours into me his divine gift, his divine influx. For the higher the inflowing thing the more easy and smooth is its flow. How God is raised upon my lowliness I argue thus: the more I abase and keep myself down the higher God towers above me. The deeper the trough the higher the crest. In just the same way, the more I abase and humble myself the higher God goes and the better and easier he pours into me his divine influx. So it is true that I exalt God by my lowliness.

48

Meister Eckhart says, We ought not to have to ask God for his grace, his divine goodness, we ought to contrive to take it ourselves without asking. God has gotten himself in his divine outflow just as the flowing. . . .

49

Meister Eckhart points out how Isaias says, 'Thy light is come to thee, the light which is eternal, unchangeable and new and inconceivable, free and thine own; well may thy heart both wonder and rejoice.'

The question is, how is it light if it is inconceivable? How does it come if it is immoveable? How be called thine if it is free? I answer first, That light is God which is light in itself and which is light in all created things and wherein all creatures are light. For to begin with I contend that light has the peculiar property of being clear and luminous in itself and in others revelation. But this belongs exclusively to God. Wherefore I say the light in itself is God. The second point is argued thus. If everything caused is a manifestation of the first cause then light of intellect in us is surely God; no mind can see the naked truth in a created

light for nothing gives what it has not got. Augustine says, ' Our mind can only see the naked truth in light which is perfectly simple and pure, God, to wit.' The third is proved as follows. If creature is light and God is light, as has been shown before, then creaturely being is merely a light in light-being. But one light in another produces but one light, so it is true.

—' Talking of light, now if so be that in this life our minds can see the naked truth by means of the light that is God, then it is also true that man may here see God and needs must it be true withal that man is here beatified.'

I answer that, albeit here a man may see the truth by means of the light that is God natheless he sees not what God is, using this light as a means. I say, what though he see God as he is, he is not yet beatified for God as a means is germane to creature. Look you, God beatifies not as being the beginning (when he is of the nature of all things), not yet as being the mean (where he is of the nature of a creature), nor even as the end (for then again he is all things), neither does he beatify as being all of these but he beatifies just inasmuch as he transcends them all ; he beatifies as being God impartible, as being simply pure light in itself.

If thou shouldst ask, ' How is he light, being incomprehensible ? ' I answer, Being incomprehensible therefore he is the light. I say, moreover, incomprehensibility is the light nature and this is plain, for his incomprehensibility comes from his unendingness. But his unendingness is due to his simplicity, to his purity (or clarity), which constitutes lightness in God. It is well said then, God is light. But know, this vision of the truth in the divine light is gotten in no school of creatures, it is learnt in the school of renouncement, of utter detachment from creatures, and for such lore the school is heaven, the book thy empty heart, eternity thy reading, thy mentor uncreated light and truth thy mentor too. This David meant when he declared, ' Lord in thy light shall we see the light.'

Then take the second question. How does he come who is without motion and how does he come who is without place ? To whom does he come who is in all hearts ?

I answer, He does not come as anything at all nor yet as gaining something for himself but he comes ordering ; he who was hidden comes and reveals himself. He comes as the light which lay concealed in people's hearts and in their minds, now taking shape in intellect and will and in the deepest being of the soul. He is in the inner man in such a way that there is naught without him and there is naught there with him : he is there all by himself. He comes, appearing in the mind and in the will, nothing at all without him, nothing at all with him but mind and will are full

of him alone. There seems nothing with him, nothing without him; the mind is but the place of God, a Godstead to itself and nothing more, as David sings, 'Lord the light of thy countenance is risen upon us' as though to say, Holding thy peace, with sighing and with rue do thou by means of intellect turn thy will round to feel the charm of God. Converse with him as man to man and as thou dost discourse with God in the first person and of God in the third so do thou talk to God in the second Person. Forgetting everything, aware of God alone, say unto him, 'Thou art my God, thou only art within, thou only art all things.' Creatures are not receptive to God, except those that are made in the image of God, like angels and man's soul: these being God-receptive he is in them and they in him. To others God is essential, not that they have gotten him but simply that they have no being without him. Not in virtue of his presence do they see him, does she see God in her innermost depth; nor is it by his power for he is powerless apart from her; but we can do nothing without him. God being in the soul as in himself therefore the soul is called a place and soul is also called the place of peace for where God is as it were in himself there is the kingdom of heaven and peace untroubled, joyous and delightful. The blest soul is at rest in God as in her own, and more so.

A man who has gone clean out of himself straightway finds God in God and God with God. He behaves like him for what he is he is to God and what he is to God God is to him: God belongs wholly to him and is wholly he and he is wholly in God and is downright God they being so entirely the same, one cannot be without the other.

50

The soul is no different from Christ save that the soul has a born nature and a created nature. This Christ has not in his eternal Person. If the soul doffed her born nature and her created nature she would be all the same, just essence itself. I say, put off thy creature; it is easy to doff the creature for this is a labour of love and the greater the pain the greater the joy.

51

Whoso has three things is beloved of God. The first is riddance of goods; the second, of friends, and the third is riddance of self.

52

Meister Eckhart said that in the essence of the soul we may surely see and know God. And the closer acquainted one is in

this life with the soul the closer acquainted with God. The only way is to abandon creature and escape from self. Harkee. Love creature as I may in God never can I love God in creature as perfectly as in myself. Thou hast to go out of thyself into thyself again : there lies the home of truth which none may find who looks for it in outward things. Mary Magdalene, when she left creatures and betook herself into her heart, found there our Lord. God is unmixed and pure : I can find God then only in the pure. But my interior soul is more undefiled and pure than any creature ; so my best chance of finding God is down in my own soul. And eke I am the life in God for 'All that is in the Father is the life in him,' John said. In this guise does the Father bear the Son and in this selfsame birth I do proceed from him. Now he declares the Son to be in him, in the very depth of his heart. But since all that was made in him is the life in him therefore I am this life in the innermost heart of God. 'And the life was the light of men,' said John. Mark you, he says the divine light in us is our light wherein we see all things conceived in the mind.

God is being, perfect being, without which are no beings ; for all beings are from his being. May we be this same being, So help us God. Amen.

53

According to Meister Eckhart, there are seven degrees of contemplation. Whoso would practise contemplation let him seek out a quiet spot and set himself to thinking, first, how noble his soul is, how she has flowed straight out of God, a thought that fills him with a great delight. Having well cogitated this, next let him think how God must love his soul to make it in the likeness of the Trinity, so that all God is by nature he may be by grace ; whereat he will delight perforce more vehemently still for it is far more noble to be made in the form of the Trinity than merely to come straight from God.—In the third stage he meditates that he has been beloved of God for aye ; the Trinity has been for aye and God has loved the soul for aye.—Fourthly, he reflects that God did ever charge him to enjoy with God what God has aye enjoyed and always shall, God himself namely. At the fifth stage the soul enters into herself and knows God in herself, which happens in this wise : No being can be without being and being feeds on being ; but being cannot live upon this food till this food is converted to the same blessed nature as that which feeds upon it and this applies to being which is being-of-itself. But there is no being-of-itself excepting God. So my soul is living on nothing but God. And by entering into oneself like this one finds God in oneself. If God will that I faint not he must give me being. No

being can stand without God so if he means me to have being then he must give me himself.

The sixth stage is, soul knows herself in God. As thus. Everything in God is God. Now my idea has always been in God, is still and ever shall be, therefore my soul is ever one with God and is God and I do find myself in God in the exalted fashion of being God in God eternally. This brings the expert soul ineffable delight.

At the seventh stage the soul knows God in himself as being without beginning whence all things emanated. This gnosis comes to no man fully in this life for it means the beholding of God, a thing not of this world.

54

Mind you, all our perfection, our whole happiness, depends on our traversing and transcending creature, time and state and entering the cause which is causeless.

55

God will never give himself openly to the soul . . . except she bring her husband, her whole free will, to wit.

56

What the joy of the Lord is none can tell. But mark this much concerning it. The joy of the Lord is the Lord himself, none else, the Lord being live, essential, actual intellect which knows itself and is and lives itself in itself and is *the same*. I do not saddle it with any mode, nay, I divest it of all mode for he himself is modeless mode who is and is glad because he is. This is the joy of the Lord and is the Lord himself. White is not black nor is aught naught. From naught naught can be taken. From aught aught can be taken and it is wholly thus with God. Of aught that is wholly in God naught remains. Soul joined to God has in him once for all all that is at all in absolute perfection. There soul forgets things and herself, as she is in herself, waking up in God, godlike as God in her, so much in love with self in him, so indiscriminately one with him, she enjoys naught but him, delighting in him. What more should she know or desire ?

57

God being still sets everything going. So desirable a thing starts them all running back into that from whence they came : to that which stays unchanged in its own self ; and the nobler the thing the more blithely it runs.

58

God can no more abide his likes than he could abide not being God. Likeness is not a thing that can belong to God. There is sameness in the Godhead, in eternity ; but likeness is not sameness. If I am same I am not like. Likeness is no form of being in *the one* ; there is sameness for me in the unity, not likeness.

59

The first work of God in the soul is the birth of his Son in the soul and from this act his other gifts do flow into the soul, as grace and virtue. What God can do in the soul is to bring forth his Son in the soul and this must needs be. It is characteristic of God that he cannot refrain, he must beget his Son in me and in you all. I say, God begets me his Son and so say I of you all as well. That we are all born of God his Son, is nothing wonderful ; we can see this with creatures. Now mark my words, I say, this man is the *not* ; I am not what you are and you are not what I am. Suppress the *not* and we are just the same ; take naught from creatures and creatures are all the same. The remainder is one. What is this one ? It is the Son the Father bears. To be the actual Son the Father bears we must cancel the naught of creatures. This naught which all creatures are cumbers a man and stops him being the very Son begotten of the Father. God bids us part with naught so as to be the selfsame Son the Father bears. For this man must be one ; he must escape from images and forms ere he can be the actual Son the Father brings to birth ; he must be rid of everything, not merely alien things, but eke his own ; for God's Son and man's son are not two sons, they are one Son, one nature ; so it behoves a man to flee from other natures as well as from his own and stand in the bare nature of the Son in the Godhead, in that only. What I say is that if one is to be the actual Son the Father bears one must give up own nature altogether. —' But many people have natures so alien to their own, how then can they surrender their own nature ? '—We always must surrender our own natures in order to become the very Son the Father bears. As St Paul says, ' We must be changed into his Son.' In other words, the Son alone being beloved of the Father, whatever things the Father loves he must love in his Son and inasmuch as we become this Son the Father bears we do be changed into his Son of love and are his very Son. Of this be sure. God will love them in us and in all creatures in the guise of his alone-begotten Son. Provided we abandon naught, become estranged from naught. We must relinquish all things, must forget all

things, keeping nothing but the single nature of the Son. It seems a great deal but is not. It is a simple thing God bids us do, he bids us give up naught. Whoso is without why has given up naught and by doing this we gain the whole world and abundance. To the good man all things come, be sure of that. If I am better than you are, all the good you do and what you have is rather mine than yours for what you have you have in naught. But if I have abandoned naught I am the very Son the Father bears and everything belongs to me in God.

60

What could be sweeter than to have a friend with whom, as with thyself, thou canst discourse all that is in thy heart ?

61

When God made man the innermost heart of the Godhead was put into man.

62

What is God's speaking ? The Father regarding himself with pure perception sees into his own simple uncompounded essence and there descrys the whole idea of creature. By doing so he speaks himself, his Word being clear understanding and this is his Son.

63

Speaking of man we mean a person ; speaking of manhood we mean human nature.

64

Doctors define what nature is. It is the thing that essence can take on. God took on manhood and not man. I say : Christ was the first man. How so ? What is first in intention is last in execution, as the roof is the finish of the house.

65

The uppermost soul-face has two acts. By one she knows God, his gift and his emanation. Therein she loves God today and knows him, and not tomorrow. The image lies not in these powers owing to their impermanence. There is another action of the upper face, which is concealed. In the concealment lies the image. Five things belong to this image. First, it is cast by another. Secondly, it answers to that same. Thirdly, it emanates therefrom. Fourthly, it is like thereto in nature ; not that it is God's nature but it is a substance which is self-subsistent ; pure light-emanation from God and differing from him

only by the fact of knowing God. Fifthly, it tends towards the exemplar whence it came. Two things adorn this image. The one, its being arrayed like him. The other, its having in it a somewhat of eternity. The soul has three powers. Not in them lies the image. But she owns a single power, namely, the active intellect. Now according to Augustine and the New Philosophers, memory, understanding and will are found herein together, nor can these three be told apart. This is the secret image answering to God, God shining straight into this image.

It is God's will that we be holy and that we do what makes us holy. Holiness is a matter of will and wisdom. According to the best authorities holiness lies in the ground, in the summit of the soul, where soul is in her cause, where she has outgrown names and her own powers withal. For powers too are the deficiency. We cannot give a name to God, nor can we name the soul in her own nature. The point where these twain meet is holiness.

Essence is so noble it gives being to all things. Were there no essence angels would be like stones.

66

A learned doctor said on one occasion when preaching in the capital, that there was once a man, we read of him in holy scripture, who went a full eight years yearning for God to indicate some person who should instruct him in the way of truth. Then in a moment of vehement desire there came a voice from God and said, 'Get thee to the temple, there shalt thou find a man to set thee on the path to truth.' And he went and found a beggar, his feet all cracked and dirty, his rags scarce worth three pence. He greeted him, 'Give thee good morrow!' He answered, 'I n'er had a bad.'—'How now!' quotha, 'Give thee good luck!' He answered, 'I never had ill.' Again he adventured, 'God bless thee! How sayst thou, Sirrah, to that?' He said, 'I was never accursed.'—'God 'a mercy!' he cried, 'unriddle me this, I trow it is beyond me!' Said he, 'I will. Thou dost wish me good morrow and I say I ne'er had a bad. Hungry I praise God; freezing I praise God; poor and forsaken withal I praise God so I never have a bad morrow. Thou dost wish me good luck; I say, I have never had ill. Whatsoever God gives or may lay up for me, be it sour or sweet, good or bad, I accept all from God for the best so I have no ill hap. Thou dost call down God's blessing upon me. I answer, I am not accursed. I have given my will up to God's, every whit, so that anything God wills I will. That is why I am never unblessed, because I have no will but God's.'—'Marry, good Sir, suppose God chose to cast thee into

hell, what wouldst thou say to that?'—'To cast me into hell?' quoth he, 'that would spite himself! Yet if he cast me into hell I should still have two arms to clasp him with. One arm is true humility and this I should put under him, embracing him the while with the other arm of love. Better,' he said, 'to be in hell with God than be in heaven without him.'

67

Said Meister Eckhart to a beggar, 'Good morrow, brother.' 'The same to you Sir, but I never have bad ones.'—'How so, brother?' he asked.—'All God gives me to bear I cheerfully suffer for his sake deeming myself unworthy, so never am I sad or sorry.'—'Where didst thou find God first?' he asked.—'Leaving all creatures I found God.'—'Where didst thou leave God, brother?' he said.—'In every man's pure heart.'—'What manner of man art thou, brother?' quoth he.—'I am a king,' he said.—'Of what?' he queried.—'Of my own flesh. Whatsoever my spirit desires of God my flesh is more eager, more ready to do and to bear than my mind to accept.'—'Kings have kingdoms,' he said: 'where is thy realm, brother?'—'In my own soul.'—'How so, brother?' he asked.—'When, having locked the doors of my five senses, I am desiring God with all my heart then do I find God in my soul as clearly and as joyful as he is in life eternal.'—He said, 'Granting thee holy, who made thee so brother?'—'Sitting still and thinking deep and keeping company with God has gotten me to heaven, for never could I rest in aught inferior to God. Now having found him I have peace and do rejoice eternally in him and that is more than any temporal kingship. No outward act however perfect but hinders the interior life.'

68

Meister Eckhart met a lovely naked boy. He asked him whence he came. He said, 'I come from God.'—'Where hast thou left him?'—'In virtuous hearts.'—'Whither away?'—'To God.'—'Where wilt thou find him?'—'Leaving all creatures.'—'Who art thou?'—'A king.'—'Where is thy kingdom?'—'In my own heart.'—'Mind no one shares it with thee.'—'So I do.' He took him to his cell and said, 'Take any coat thou wilt.'—'Then I should be no king' (said he), and vanished.

It was God himself that he had had with him a little spell.

69[1]

A daughter came to the Dominican convent asking for Meister Eckhart. The porter said, 'Who shall I tell him?' She

[1] See also Spamer's *Texte*, C, 5.

answered, 'I do not know.'—'Why do you not know?' he enquired.—'Because,' she said, 'I am not either virgin or spouse, not man nor wife nor widow nor lady nor lord nor wench nor thrall.' The porter went off to Meister Eckhart. 'Do come out,' he said, 'to the strangest wight that ever I heard and let me come too and you put your head out and say, 'Who is asking for me?' He did so. She said to him what she had said to the porter. Quoth he, 'My child, thou hast a shrewd and ready tongue, I prithee now thy meaning?'—'An I were virgin,' she replied, 'I were in my first innocence; spouse, I were bearing the eternal Word within my soul unceasingly; were I a man I should grapple with my faults; wife, should be faithful to my husband. Were I a widow I should be ever yearning for my one and only love; as lady I should render fearful homage; as wench I should be living in meek servitude to God and to all creatures and as thrall I should be working hard, doing my best tamely to serve my Master. Of all these things I am no single one who am the one thing as the other running thither.' The doctor went away and told his students, 'I have been listening to the most perfect person I ween I ever met.'

This fragment is entitled, 'Meister Eckhart's Daughter.'

70

MEISTER ECKHART'S FEAST

Meister Eckhart tells how once upon a time there came a beggar to Cologne on Rhine in quest of poverty and the life of truth. Accosted him a noble dame, 'Eat with me, brother, of God's charity!'—'Gladly,' quoth he. When they were seated she encouraged him, 'Eat heartily, be not ashamed.'—''Tis wrong,' he said, 'to eat too much, to eat too little is wrong too; the just mean lies between: I will eat as a beggar.'—'What is a beggar?' she asked.—He said, 'It means three things. First, being dead to natural things. Next, not having inordinate desire of possessions. Thirdly, begrudging suffering to everyone except oneself.'—'Tell me,' she questioned, 'what is poverty of the inner man?'—'That also means three things,' he said. 'First, complete detachment from creatures, which are out of God, in time and in eternity. Secondly, abject humility of the outward and the inward man. Thirdly, an active interior life: the mind unceasingly wrought up to God.'—'What is poverty of spirit?' she asked.—'You want to know too much,' he said.—'I can never know too much,' said she, 'of God's glory and man's happiness.'—'True,' he returned. 'That again means three things. First,

not knowing aught but God in time and in eternity. Secondly, not seeking God outside oneself. Thirdly, not owning any property that one conveys from place to place.'—'But surely Meister Eckhart, our father, must get from out his cell the sermons he preaches from his pulpit?'—'Not he,' he said.—'Whence then?' (she asked).—'The more temporal the more personal, the more personal the more temporal.'—'I trow,' she said, 'this guest is not out of Bohemia.'[1] Quoth he, 'The sun that shines here in Cologne is shining also in the town of Prague.'—'Explain,' she begged. He said, 'Tis not my place with Meister Eckhart present.' Meister Eckhart said, 'He who knows nothing of the truth from within, if he woo it without shall find it too within.'—'The reckoning is paid,' she cried. And he: 'Lady, you furnish the wine.'—'I am not loath,' she answered, 'an you ask me.'

(So Meister Eckhart asked her), 'Wherein do we divine the working of the Holy Ghost within our souls?' She answered, 'In three things. First, in the waning day by day of personal things, desires and natural love. Next, in the waxing of divine love and of grace from day to day. Last, in the eager charity which moves us to bestir ourselves on our fellow-man's behalf before our own.' Quoth he, 'Our Lord's friends prove it.' Anon he asked, 'How does the spiritual man divine God's presence at his orisons or exercises?' She answered, 'By three things. First, by the object he sets before his chosen, world scorn and body suffering, to wit. Next, by a growth in grace commensurate with the love betwixt himself and God. The third one is that God does never leave him without hint of some fresh truth.'—'That is, of course, the case,' he said. 'Now tell me, how does he know if what he does is wholly in accordance with the sovran will of God?' She answered, 'By three things. First, clear consciousness never fails him. Secondly, he has union with God without break. Thirdly, the heavenly Father keeps giving his Son birth in him, in inspiration.' Quoth Meister Eckhart, 'Were every reckoning as well paid as this one for the wine there's many a soul in purgatory would this day be in life eternal.' Whereon the mendicant chimed in, 'What more remains it is the Doctor's turn to pay.'—'Leave the old to their age,' protested Meister Eckhart.—'Then love shall settle it,' the beggar said, 'that never faileth.'

Quoth the lady, 'Prithee father, how does one know oneself the heavenly Father's child?' He answered, 'By three things. First, one does everything for love. Next, one takes everything the same from God. Thirdly, one has no hope in anyone but God.'

[1] 'Bêheim (Bohemia) I interpret thus: *bê* stands for *beatus*; *heim, domus* or *house* is to be interpreted as *own house* or *fixed abode*.' Wilhelm von Wenden.

Quoth the beggar, ' Prithee father, how are we to tell if virtue is doing her perfect work in us ? ' He answered, ' By three things, love of God for God's sake, good for good's sake, truth for truth's sake.'

Quoth the Doctor, ' My children, how lives the teacher of the truth ? ' The lady said, ' He practises what he preaches.' The beggar cried, ' Agreed. But the truth in his heart no words can say.'

As the eternal Word is the birth of the heavenly Father, so is the will of God the birth and the becoming of all creatures.

THIS IS MEISTER ECKHART'S FEAST

IV

LIBER POSITIONUM

1. Here the disciple is supposed to question his master, saying, ' Tell me, could God an he would have made all things as good as he is himself ? ' The master said, Yes, what God wills he can do.—' Are things all made of his own nature ? ' The master said, No.

2. The disciple inquired, ' What is the soul made of ? '—She is made out of nothing.—' Where did God get the nothing he made the soul out of ? '—Some say he got it in himself. That is not the case for in God is not nothing : that which is in God is God.—' But God has all things in himself and without God is nothing. Surely then he gets this nothing out of himself ? '—The master said, No, not at all ! He gets it neither in himself nor out of himself, nor above himself nor below himself. There is no getting nothing from inside or out. If it were gotten anywhere it would not be nothing. Anything that does this : takes nothing from nowhere and makes of it something, is God. So runs the argument that the nothing is gotten from nowhere. They asked St Augustine about this mysterious nothing out of which the soul is made and where, apart from place, this nothing hides ? His explanation was that this nothing is openly enclosed in betwixt God and Godhead, in his almighty power. Were it in close confinement it would not be naught : it either would have place or else be God by nature, the soul being made of the nature of God. But it is not. Ergo, this nothing is at large in the almighty power of the Father to whom it is as easy to get from nowhere naught as aught. It is confined to his omnipotence to be able to take naught from nowhere and from it create aught. Whatever can do this is God.

3. Now another question. Dionysius says, Tell me, what about the soul who is in full enjoyment of her rights : what is it that she has by rights at the height of her perfection ?—By rights the soul has knowledge : clear understanding of all things and is so mellowed by love as to be all unwitting, when people love and hate her, whether she be not dearer to her haters than her lovers. And this soul has by rights absolute freedom from herself and things : sunk in the sovran good she cannot find herself at all. Here we have two natures. One, the thing that sinks ; the other, what it sinks in. She sinks eternally but never touches bottom. This

sinking shows her two things. In sinking from herself she is more God than creature. The fact that she does sink proclaims her creaturely for deity sinks not.—But when she has yielded her aught to his aught and her naught is subsisting in naught, then what will belong to her aught and her naught ?—None can tell, but she has no more than her rights. That is the answer.

4. Another question is, has the soul more enjoyment in the source of joy or in the vision of its wonders ?—Consider what she has in each. In admiring its wonders she obeys the selfsame wondrous law that the first cause laid down for all causes as befitting each. But soul does not stop here, she transcends wonder. The wonders have become her potential being. Hence her enjoyment is much keener in the source of joy than in the beholding of its wonders. In the source is her abode, not in its wondrous vision. There all wonders end ; there all is one to her and one in all. That is the answer to this question.

5. The question is, if the Godhead has all things how comes it then neither to give nor to beget ? If it does not beget it is not Father.—The explanation is this. Man's nature is called manhood, and manhood as such neither acts nor begets ; it acts and begets in a human person. And the same with Godhood : it is all-containing and yet not active and productive in itself. What it does is all done by the Persons in person and nature. The Godhead is called fruitful inasmuch as it is brought forth in the Persons in Person and essence.

6. An angel may do three things in the soul. Either he confronts her with the scriptures or with the holy life or, again, with the example of Christ Jesus, showing her something clearly as though in a mirror wherein one may espy some blemish on the human face and so proceed to cure it. Thus she sees herself, what she still lacks ; where she is not as yet all that she ought to be ; what things to leave and what to keep ; how much or little she should be to things : all this she plainly sees. And whatever an angel can do the devil may very well copy.—' Have we no means of telling, Sir, if it is an angel or the devil ? '—Yes, they are very different. Tests for angel and the devil are as follows. Anything an angel does is done in the light, orderly and clearly, and the soul rejoices in the amiable presence of the angel ; also it is a sign to know him by that she is left with a sense of pleasure. In counterfeiting this the devil makes it vague, confused, ambiguous, and the soul, affrighted at this haunting of the fiend, is restless and depressed and by this she may know it is the devil.

The angel talks virtue to the soul, the fiend talks virtue too but God does not talk virtue.—' For the love of God, good Sir, tell us what you mean.'—I will explain. The angel talks virtue to the

soul and his talk (the angel's), which is of necessary virtue, is friendly and persuasive, something in this fashion: 'See, there is still this to go and that to do and the other to leave off': orderly counsel and plain and the soul finds peace in complying with his words. The devil talks virtue too, but he urges superfluous virtues: too much fasting and watching and kneeling, too much weeping, and his counsels are more in the nature of commands, as thus: 'Do this or that or thou art damned,' or 'art not good nor perfect.' An orgy of uncontrolled virtues with no definite aim, that is his cue and the soul is affrighted within her and gleans no satisfaction from his words.—But God's talk is not of virtue though it is wonderful talk. The burden of it a fair Word that is passing good to hear. The Holy Ghost goes before the angel and embracing the soul prepares her to receive what the angel has to say; and the Son gives wisdom and order to the words and God the Father help and consummation to that which is spoken in the soul. Thus God does not talk virtue in the soul; he forestalls the angel and prepares the soul, giving wisdom, order and achievement to the angelic utterance in the soul; the Holy Trinity all work together in her without speaking.

7. The statement that our Lord from time to time holds converse with good people and that they hear words or become impressed with the sense of certain sayings such as, 'Thou art mine elect, or my beloved; thou shalt never leave me and I will never leave thee,' and the like, things like this, I say, should be accepted with reserve and judged upon their merits for locutions of this kind are often due to a trick the soul has, when indulging in comfortable intuitions of divinity, of answering herself by a sort of reflex action. When the soul, aflood with God, is void and free from sensible affections she grows apace in created light till nothing transcends her but intellect and essential knowledge. In this detachment the knower is the known; out of her own light she creates what she desires. Such is the effect of the benignant reign of essential understanding. Aristotle says in the third book of *The Soul*, 'Every immaterial substance or isolated form is in itself both the knower and the known,' and this is why the soul, cut off from the corporal things by the encircling flood of God, draws deiform truth out of her own self. It follows that anything in her of which she has a rational perception is not said by God: God's speech is none other than the perfect image of divine truth wherein the spirit is caught up out of its selfhood, past understanding, into intellect. There in unity she understands without understanding.

8. To drag the hawthorn through the hay without a catch we must lop it well, like our Lord Jesus Christ, the tree of love, who

dragged the hawthorn through the hay of this wicked world, so shorn of all its branches that no moving thing could cling thereto and so he gathered up nothing that was unstable. And to attain to him we must be too bare for things to cling to us or we to them. We take up our cross when stripping everything of self and self of everything we cling all pure and naked to the bare cross of Christ.

9. He who loves aright loves not nor is not loved. They love and are beloved who can be pleased and pained: they pour out themselves in love on creatures and creatures back on them. But they love not nor are they loved who are not moved by creature good and ill; these neither give nor do they take: they pour not out on creature nor creature back on them. They love not neither are they loved. We ought to love God out of love. They love in love who love for why: who love him for some bodily or temporal good. But they love out of love who love without a why: who do not love for temporal good nor yet eternal: they love him merely for himself, for his own sake pure and simple apart from anything he gives.

10. We read of John the Baptist that he was a prophet. He was more than prophet for when the Holy Ghost from time to time spake by the prophets they were thereafter as they were before, in sinful habit. Prophets are people who are now and then constrained to play this part. While the Holy Ghost is speaking through them by actual infusion of his grace they are exercising virtue and thereafter they revert to their former habit: they are called virtuous as practising virtue intermittently: they do right and also wrong. Not so St John; he was more than prophet for he practised virtue not at intervals, it was his natural and settled wont. And those who follow him in this are not prophets either, they are more than prophets, seeing as they do in the clear light of God exactly what to do and what to leave undone and having given them the Godlike power to act up to their lights with effortless, spontaneous delight and delightful spontaneity. These are called virtuous not because they practise virtue intermittently: they are fixed and established in it. That thing is habitual which we do at one time and at another not; it is an alternation. That is not habitual which is continuous and without admixture.

11. A good man is known by three things. One is singleness of will: all we call nature his will is free from. The second is clear understanding: any mental knowledge that she has his soul has fully mastered: she either approfounds it here or yonder in the common ground during illumination. The third is peace of mind: such images as may occur therein are no hindrance to the soul.

12. Three things distinguish the solitary soul. The first is,

cessation of desire : no more wants or sense of deficiency. The second is, active love for and acquiescence in the will of God. The third is a lively feeling in the soul of the love of the Holy Ghost.

13. Divine good in the singular no body or blood receives but it does receive God's manifold goodness. It is simple divine good for the spirit to be rapt out of itself into God's oneness, there to understand without sensible perception. But God's manifold goodness means anything revealed to her in form and likeness, for this is all a matter of the mortal nature.—The heavenly Father gives his consolation to none but the man of peaceful heart. Christ said to his disciples, ' My peace I give unto you.'

14. Let no one claim to have received the perfect gift of the Holy Ghost, who can be shaken in his convictions by any arguments that are disquieting. I refer to things which are spoken contrary to our knowledge of eternal truth.

15. Nature comes with God into creature and driving God out remains alone in creature. Spirit goes with creature into God and driving creature out stays by itself in God. The most perfect mode of soul is one of self-oblivion in good works as a whole and the way thereto is the clear discernment of special imperfections. In the least of mortal quests there is at stake all natural creature appetite. Effortless achievements are wiped out of the mind as though they had not been. It is true wisdom to recognise the folly of evil and the freedom of perfection.

18. Hosea the prophet, rapt in wonder, had a threefold marvel shown him. The first one was, how God is one in essence and three in Person. The second marvel, which, though somewhat less is still ineffable and incomprehensible to creature, is this : how two natures meet together in one Person. The third marvel is the marvel of marvels : how creator is creature and creature is creator. The prophet Hosea says, ' His going forth is prepared as the morning ; he shall come unto us as the soft evening rain.' Here the morning light suggests the nearness of his coming : the dawn is the herald of the day. The day dawns thrice. First in the chamber of the Person of the Father. Next, in the chamber of the Person of the Son. Thirdly, in the world. The first dawn was the will of the Father ; the second, the obedience of the Son ; the third one broke when their common Spirit caught the precious most pure blood-drops that ever flowed from the virgin heart of Mary. The fire of love once kindled, he no longer tarries : day is here.

20. Suppose a man insults me and I silence him by my retort, it is not I who conquer : I am conquered. I conquer if, in true humility, I hold my peace. Conquering we are conquered and being conquered conquer.

21. It is a question if angels grow in heaven? I declare they do. They go on growing till the day of judgment, waxing in knowledge and in love; by then the lowest is about as wise as the highest was when he was created.—'But tell me Sir, does the soul grow in heaven as well?'—I say, No.—'But why, Sir, should the angel grow and not the soul?'—For this reason. The soul grows in the body and when she quits the body that is her judgment day: the highest she has reached by then is the nearest she will ever get to knowing God. But her growth is far nobler than an angel's for what an angel has comes by no effort of his own; hers is the reward of toil so that one light of hers is worth ten of any angel's.

22. Three kinds of progress take place in serious people. The first is natural; when, fought to a finish, man's nature is vanquished and subdued, then at length he sees all random thoughts as things he can turn to his account and we to ours. Not a single notion but will serve to bring light to pious people, and this (light) is essential almost as much as natural; essential, though by grace, a divine repugnance to all base inventions.—The second kind of progress is unconscious. The man is spiritualised so that his words, his ways and his whole self enlighten other people with a realization of their own shortcomings. Nature sleeping, spirit wide awake, that I call light and she is a light not alone to other people but the devil quails before her.—'Sir, tell me, what is he afraid of?'—The devil does not know what is in the soul except what he can recognise by its outward form. Supposing her brimfull of light then divine light comes surging out of her and when the fiend sees this he is afraid and durst not test her with a notion, so the soul stays undisturbed. Which is to her credit though unbeknownst to her.—The third progress is spiritual. When such a soul is flooded with the influx of God's spirit, love reinforces love, light light, giving ■ love which fires the soul and which she cannot fail to be aware of. The first growth is conscious, the third also is conscious and the middle one unconscious.

23. Plato says, 'The soul of all creatures is the Godhead.' Then our Lord Jesus Christ is the soul of the elect.

24. The question is, what is the effect on man of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ? I say that its effect on man is to clarify his nature and prevent him committing mortal sin. On the enlightened it confers another boon, receptivity to the divine light and then though they die they will have nothing between.

27. 'Pray Sir, one to whom eternal light is given, suppose he were to die, would he have aught between?'—Once having had eternal light he never has anything between.

28. 'Tell me, good Sir, what is divine light?'—With divine

light the natural life is no obstacle to the eternal light, or in other words, there is no consenting to sin. When we are unable to act up to our lights that is a sign that we have not received eternal light. Knowledge with the power to apply it, that is eternal light. He who receives eternal light takes everything the same.

29. ' But even good people are now and then perturbed : have they then no light ? '—When our Lord Jesus Christ was drawing near his passion, his agony of suffering pierced his soul and called forth the rebuke to Judas at the table and St Peter on the mount, to whom he said, ' Couldst thou not watch with me a while ? Thou who didst promise to be with me unto death.' But he did not on this account lose the light of unity. Once more harmonious with his Father's will he was filled with joy at having in accord therewith submitted willingly to pain. The fact of being moved involves no loss of light : anything conceived in time is moved in time. While we are in time we are affected by time. But the more imperturbable one is the more one is established in eternity. By their deeds ye shall know them.

30. He alone can do God's will who resigns his own. We are strong in proportion as we are inspired with divine power to withstand the things that come between ourselves and God. When we stand in our primitive innocence, then at last we begin to live.

31. ' But when is a man in a state of primitive innocence ? '—Primitive innocence is not attained without divine light. Simple, primitive innocence reigns when the pattern of all virtues is present in a man and he stands without impediment of nature in the eternal truth. It is only by treading upon creature that we reach the bottom rung of Godhood.—' What is the bottom rung of Godhood ? '—It is spiritualised nature.

32. ' Sir, is it better having and giving or not having and letting ? '—Letting is better than giving. Giving adds more lustre, letting shows more spirituality. We shed our blood ; the saints let their blood be shed.

33. ' Will you tell me, Sir, what causes the decay of tenderness ? ' —What is the tenderness you mean ?—' I mean interior tenderness.' —To have it is a sign of immaturity ; to lose it betokens adolescence. The father pets his child when the child is young but as it gets to know its father's will he grows seemingly less fond and this less obvious fondness is an indication of the child's approach to man's estate. With the soul it is the same. His tenderness to her proclaims her immature, but as she grows in knowledge and constant harmony with the will of God he inspires her with less irrational fondness and this is a sign she is developing.

35. That alone is perfect which does not seek for aught outside

itself.—Whatever we can say about perfection to that we can attain.—A gentle man is one whose serenity no trouble can disturb.—We stand before God while we do not cross the will of God.

36. When does God work in man unhindered?—God finds no hindrance in a man who takes both good and ill from God with the same thankfulness.

37. Sure proof of true humility is the fearful joy of being praised. For on coming into touch with truth and finding in himself a witness of it, a man is sensible of pleasure but fears it as a likely cause of his undoing.

38. The right loyal heart receives with bitterness inventions of the soul which are not sent by God.—That heart is kind whose graciousness is proof against every good and ill.

39. The treasure of God is loss of possessions, people's despisery, sickness and submission to God.

41. Our Lord Jesus Christ waxed not at all in eternal light; but the things he taught, in beholding these he took peculiar pleasure.

42. Pious folk should imitate the deified man, Christ. By imitating Christ I mean becoming Godlike. What I mean by Godlike is, your words, deeds, conduct, being free from human wont. By human I mean imperfect. In proportion to his imperfection a man is moveable by aught or anybody can be (moved) by him.—'What do you mean by moveable?'—By moveable I mean not impatience only: moveable I call anything affected by either good or ill and that can in anywise be anything to anyone or to whom anyone can as such be anything, and I call immoveable only that which nothing can affect and which affects nothing. That man then I call immoveable to whom good and ill are just the same; who is as far as possible exempt from the agitations of both joy and sorrow. It will never be natural to him that his emotions stir not independently of mind. But once the mind takes charge, it is all over and as it was before and then the man is not a mortal man, he is man deified.

43. Good people have three sorts of expert knowledge. In the first place the intelligence is sharpened so that it estimates correctly the smallest thing presented to it: its more or less amount of sensible admixture they gauge to a nicety and can act accordingly.—In the second place, when they have to do a thing they can always tell whether it proceeds from the ground of God or the ground of nature. Thirdly, so subtile is their understanding that any ghostly form, the very faintest light, which appears to them, they recognise for fiend or spirit.

44. The true test of interior perfection is that nothing thou doest from without casts any shadow within.

45. When the Godhead began to inquire how mankind could be restored to its original perfection, the Father sat in counsel in the chamber of the Holy Trinity. The Father said, ' Who shall we send to save mankind ? ' Answered him the Son and said, ' Father, send me : I will save mankind.' Then stooped him down the eternal Word of the heavenly Father, that is to say, his Son, who is the middle Person of the Holy Trinity, and clad himself in human nature. Remaining what he was he took upon him that which he was not and was thus obedient to his Father in heaven and not in heaven only but on earth as well. Obedience to his Father and love towards mankind constrained him to perfect all his Father's work.

46. ' Sir, for God's sake, may I ask you something that I want to know, something very subtle ? '—By all means. Whatever it may be and however subtle, I will try and answer. Ask me what you will.—' Well, what I want to know is this : was our Lord Jesus Christ hindered in any way by doing outward works ? ' —I can give you a definite answer to that. The soul of Christ was never an independent entity as such. It no sooner was than it was Christ ; directly it was made, straightway it was united ; first one and then the other it is true but yet both timeless. At his first appearance Christ was snatched from independence into the keeping of the middle Person of the Trinity where in essential wisdom he gazes without blenching at the naked fullness of the divine perfection. From the moment when Christ's soul and body were united with the Godhead his soul has been gazing at the Godhead as it is doing to this day. As to the lower powers of his soul which function in the body making possible his preaching and his teaching and the other things he did, there the joy of contemplation was diminished somewhat : not the vision but the pleasure of the sight. But the higher powers of his soul, wherein he was united, these remained always in unveiled contemplation. Now I have explained how Christ was hindered and at the same time not. One thing more and let that suffice as giving you the key to the whole matter. The hindrance was physical not psychic. But even so he never failed in the minutest point to fulfil the mission on which his Father sent him, preaching and teaching and doing outward works whereby he earned reward and honour.

47. ' Could Christ earn reward ? '—There are two rewards ; one of them Christ earned, the other not. One of the rewards we earn by our good works is the vision of the Godhead. This reward Christ did not earn since from the moment Christ's body was united with the Godhead, his soul has been gazing at the Godhead, as it is doing to this day. The other reward we earn by our good

works is the glorification of the body with the soul after the day of judgment and this reward Christ earned by his holy life, his body being glorified together with his soul at his resurrection. Now thou knowest how Christ did earn reward and also not.

48. 'Just one other thing.'—Tell me, what is that?—'You say that Christ gained honour. What honour did he gain?'—Christ has the title of The Head of Holy Christendom and this honour Christ has won by his holy life.

49. 'A man to whom eternal light is given, is he prone to sin in time?'—One to whom eternal light is given may well stoop to imperfection and sometimes falls an easier prey to frivolity and suchlike venial sins than another man.—'What is the cause of this propensity?'—It comes from being engrossed in one simple thing; multitudinous images disturb the soul, tossing her about with their various conceits. Once conceiving unity she is distracted by diversity. But as soon as she begins to see, it is as though it had never been and she can free herself completely without the slightest effort; which is a sign that she has eternal light. To see and be unable to escape would argue lack of eternal light. You know now how it is that people, even with eternal light, are prone to sin. St Paul sinned after he had been caught up.

50. The first and noblest work of God is motionlessness: divine rest. It stands to reason that the maker of the motionless is himself unmoved. Were God not immoveable there could nothing motionless be made.

Aristotle says all moving things proceed from rest and from necessity and moving things are all seeking rest. Man likewise then ought to be as motionless as possible.—'When is a man motionless?'—The soul is motionless when nothing whatever can perturb her; when she is neither glad nor sad and cannot be gladdened nor yet saddened. And she must be unnecessitous.—'When is she unnecessitous?'—The soul is unnecessitous when she has no need to cleave to any creature and not only has no need, it is hell-pain to her to dwell upon the form of creature since there is no rest for her save in the formless form of God. She is unnecessitous when she has come into her rights and, with no need of change, rests in the unnecessitous nothingness of his unchanging nature.

51. 'Sir, what did St Paul mean by saying, "We shall be one spirit with God?" When is the soul one spirit with God?'—She is one spirit with God when she has no image or anything between. And she is turned to spirit when she is not subject to any creature love or appetite.

52. 'Sir, what is perfect love?'—Perfect love leaves nothing

less than God.—' Pray tell me what you mean.'—I mean, having hold of nothing but God they cannot leave go of less than God, who are as they should be. Natural ties have been cut.

53. ' Tell me, Sir, for the love of God, is it possible to pray or ask of God quite unselfishly ? '—Oh yes. I will tell you how. There are two cases of unselfish prayer. The first is on our own account, that we may be rid of some imperfection which comes between us and eternal truth. The second case is prayer for some other person's sin, knowing all the facts and that he desires to be free. For these things we may pray and with avidity. But our human will must confine itself to the will of God, as thus : ' Lord, thou knowest I desire not nor do I will aught save what thou dost will : an thou know something better, give me that,' so losing thine own and keeping his.

54. ' Sir, what about the man they talk of sometimes among pious folk, who sets such store by physical austerities and long-winded prayers ; is that the best or is there something better ? '—The most perfect bond that we can have is innocence, a blameless life, and being wholly without guile it is best to drop words altogether for words are interlopers between ourselves and God.

55. ' What is the sign of union with God's will ? '—Perfect singlemindedness.—It is characteristic of the gracious, deified mind, from trivial error to extract much wisdom.—The very least thing in excess of absolute necessity will count.—Christ's every action is a pious precept.—An angel's nature is his intellect and his intellect is his impartible nature.

56. He to whom light is given grows conscious of the darkness in all creatures.

57. ' Will you tell me, Sir, why Solomon should say, The righteous man falls seven times a day ? What is this falling of the righteous man ? '—It is the lapsing of his soul from the highest level she can reach to : failure to remain at the very summit where she transcends creature in God, that is the fall of the perfect man.

58. ' When does one person love another in God without admixture of nature ? '—The sure test of pure divine love is the sense of nothing but God, always with enlightenment.

59. ' Why is it that a man will ask for things he does not need and knowing this to be the case will still go on doing it : what does he do it for ? '—It is nature. When appetites are uncontrolled a man will ask for the impossible.—' But supposing it is not impossible nor yet unlikely and he is self-controlled, what is it then ? '—I tell you it is nature.—' Yes, yes, good Sir, but leave out nature ! '—That will I not. It is nature inasmuch as it is mingled with divine nature.

60. ' What is an angel ? '—Angel like soul is a perpetual nature.

The soul has no parts, this and that. Wherever she turns she turns as a whole.

61. ' What is essential virtue ? '—In essential virtue man is in a state of having no active heart's desire ; he knows what is right and is able to live up to his lights in the power of his primitive nobility.

62. ' What is the sign of eternal life ? '—Absence of hate is a sign of eternal light. So far as we fail in love towards all mankind, we never really have it.

63. ' Pray Sir, when are we discriminating ? '—When we know one thing from another.—' And when are we above discrimination ? ' —When we know all in all then we transcend discrimination.

64. ' What does St Paul mean when he speaks of " redeeming the time because the days are evil " ? '—He calls the days evil referring to the changeableness of time. He says, redeeming the time—' When is time redeemed ? '—Let me tell you. To do a good work is not to redeem time but to pawn it. It is a good work to rest from sin and exercise some virtue. To do better work is not redeeming time. He who perfects by practice does better. To do the best of all, that does redeem the time. It is best of all to rest in the embrace of God.—' But is that redeeming the time ? '—To be sure it is. Time is not redeemed in time. The redemption of time is the timeless spirit's atonement above time.

65. ' Will you expound that sentence in St John's epistle, " Blessed are the dead that die in God ? " When do we die in God ? ' —When everything is dead that intervenes between ourselves and God.—' Well then, will you tell me what is the joy of spirits in eternity : are they always finding something new in God ? '—Verily I say, if they did not find it ever new there would be an end to eternity. Were there aught in God exhaustible by creature, eternity would end and heaven cease to be.

66. ' Sir, what is true wisdom ? '—True wisdom, so says one philosopher, means the knowledge of all created things and the creator who has made them.

67. According to St Paul, the closest bond of love a man can have is harmony of will. Our Lord in his love made eternal provision for all human suffering when his Son died upon the cross.

68. He follows hardest on the heels of God who leaves all temporal things behind and clings to the eternal.

69. Joy is the reward of virtue, says one of the saints.—' Tell me, when does a man do his duty by creatures ? '—When he knows them and leaves them.

70. A saint says, So long as we will and will not our free will is not captive to God. If any man does as he should God will do what that man would.

71. ' Sir, how would you define grace ? '—I define grace as him whom no joy nor pleasure can gladden, no pain nor adversity sadden.

72. The most successful prayërs are the willing learners from creature or the spoken word.

73. ' When does God work in man unhindered ? '—When he takes good and ill from God with the same thankfulness.—' But, with one and the same thankfulness or each with thankfulness ? ' —They must be received with the same thankfulness. Time is always true to its own nature but were soul and body displaced into eternity motion would be lost. The less moveable thou art the more thou art established in eternity.

74. ' Sir, when is virtue present in a man ? '—There is virtue in the soul just as memory and knowledge and love are in the soul, for they are spiritual in their substance. There is virtue in the soul and it is present in a man as long as it is not cast out in lawless utterances.

75. ' Will you tell me, Sir, why we are sometimes quite unmoved in suffering whereas at other times we hail it with delight and then again it readily affects us ? '—Supposing a man is by himself with his senses indrawn from the multiplicity of things and recollected to himself, then his soul will be unmoved inasmuch as God is present in her. But if his senses are broadcast upon things and more or less unstable on those things, he will be readily affected. Then let him beware of lawless utterance ; he must recollect himself and in deep humility just appeal lovingly to God : ' Lord thou knowest I can do naught without thee,' and quick as thought thou art back in God.

76. ' Pray Sir, is one quite detached when one gives no consent to sin and bitter as it was to part from things it were just as bitter to return to them ? '—Yes, surely.

77. ' Is eternal light vouchsafed to anyone who falls short ? '—Oh yes ! It was to St Paul.

78. ' Is no holy soul beatified that has shortcomings ? '—Yes, thousands if one reckoned them.—' But no saint can be sanctified unless he has received eternal light ? '—Yes, numbers.

79. ' What do you mean, Sir, when you talk of divine light and eternal light, are they the same or is there a difference ? Do they consist in the same thing ? '—They are not the same. By one light we know, by another we can and by a third one we do. Now to distinguish between them. To perceive divine truth and answer thereto, that I call divine light. I say it is God's light because it is Godlike. It is not God himself ; it may be given by an angel or a saint. Eternal light, again, I define to be the perfect image of the impartible nature of God and of it St Paul says, the

third heaven and its light are not immediately present to us here in this body ; we have to return to our true selves. Ah, woe is me, how wearisome my exile ! It is impartible light when the soul departing from the body flies straight back to God into whose light she is absorbed. Beyond this her perception does not go. And I mean by impartible light the vision of God with nothing between : no creaturely hindrance, no time, no looking back : in eternity.—St John had eternal light ; he knew the whole truth and attained to it. All things were possible to him, but though not guilty of any mortal sin he was still liable to its suggestion. That no man can escape.

80. ' What is the sign of eternal light ? '—It is a sure sign when everything not God is irksome and virtue has become a second nature.

81. Talkativeness or over-attention to our daily wants is fatal to friendly intercourse with God. If we would escape the purgatorial fires we must set a watch on all our ways, especially our words. Different is the cleansing fire of the perfection of God and the love of the soul, between them imperfections are consumed away.

82. Good people's food is clear consciousness and intercourse with holy souls and constant reception of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Neither the devil nor yet any creature ever gave an appetite for the body of our Lord Jesus Christ : this comes from God alone, you may be sure.

84. ' Tell me, Sir, do we find in holy writ mention of any rapture besides that of St Paul ? '—No.—' But they tell me three are to be found : Adam was caught up while he was asleep and St John when he was resting on the bosom of our Lord and St Paul when he was felled to earth ; they each saw God without means, without any image or likeness.'—Verily, I say, before the death of our Lord Jesus Christ no man had ever seen God in his God-nature except that golden temple our Lady Mary at the moment when our Lady conceived divine and human nature ; then she received eternal light and saw God in his simple nature, but before that no creature.—' Then what was Adam's rapture and St John's ? '—When God created Adam his body was made painless like his soul. You could have hewn him in his sleep and it would not have hurt him for the lower powers of his soul were obedient to her higher ones and she was subject to the law of her perfect nature and unhindered by gross body and this was his by right of nature. Had he stayed at the summit of his soul he would have kept her in her maker. He knew God had created him and that divine nature was destined to unite with human nature and he had discriminate knowledge of all creatures, each in its natural perfection just as God had made them and he was carried away by enjoyment

of the sight. You must know that he was sleeping like any other man.—' Then what was the rapture of St John ? '—He was resting. Rest so called from its likeness to the abstraction of our Lord Jesus Christ and St John's from its likeness to them both : a gentle sinking into dispassion, that is what his rapture was.

85. ' Is a man liable to fall once he has had eternal light ? '—I say, No. If Adam had seen God he would not have fallen and the archangel Lucifer, if he had seen God in his impartible essence would not have fallen.—' I have heard tell that in ecstasy there is no interference with free will. Is that really so ? '—It neither strengthens nor weakens the free will. Verily I say, anyone who holds that a man can fall after eternal light, though he commit no greater sin than St Agnes did, shall die infallibly for it is heresy and mortal sin to have this belief. That soul can no more fall than St Peter could. The heavenly Father might as well forsake his Son as the soul wherein he has given his Son birth. If the Father ends the Son ends ; if the Son ends eternity ends ; if eternity ends the soul ends.

86. ' Sir, when you speak of God's birth, of the Father begetting his Son in the soul, is this birth the same as the rapture of St Paul and what happened at Pentecost to the disciples or are these different things ? '—They are exactly the same.—' Then when you talk of eternal light do you mean God's birth in the soul or is that something else ? '—I mean the same thing ; they are identical. But one thing I do say. Birth is the better term and nearer to the truth though in reality there is no difference. I will tell you why. An angel by nature is eternal light ; the sun is eternal light ; the stars are eternal light. Eternal light is ascribed to things that are not changed by time ; and since we can attribute eternal light to creatures so we may to man in an imperfect sense. But birth applies to the heavenly Father alone, this birth in eternity. God catches the soul all at once to himself and his birth is gotten therein. There it is to him well-nigh the same as the Son in the Trinity. I say, well-nigh, for it is there by grace and the Son by nature.—' Suppose a man has eternal light, is he prone to temporal sin ? '—It was after Pentecost that Peter sinned.

90. ' Can a man make certain of having nothing more to overcome ? '—St Paul had things to overcome after he was caught up. And our Lord Jesus Christ had to overcome. Though his soul and body were united with the Godhead and the Godhead is impassible, yet his future pains were present with him, racking all his soul-powers.

91. ' When the soul prepares for God by chasing away thoughts and discarding all the things she has relied on and endeavours to get rid of every means but without success, tell me, Sir, what

ought she to do next ? '—When the images from outside are all gone let her abase herself and lovingly entreat of him somewhat that she still lacks.—' But if she refuses to desire or entreat, being minded to remain quite simple ? '—Then let her simply fix her mind on God with vehement longing.—' But surely, Sir, longing is a means and she wants to be quite simple and direct: without any images and free from this and that, with not a word or prayer to come between ? '—I say it is impossible in the unglorified body ; she ought not to expect it.—' If that is the case, Sir, then it seems to me her watchword ought to be refusal—of objective things and subjective images—and that is her best way.'—There is no doubt of it ; she can do no more. When a soul like this is rapt above herself into naked knowledge of naught it is God who does it at his own good pleasure, absolutely freely, without any help of hers.

92. ' Sir, can we realize all our minds can grasp ? '—No. I can conceive of things I cannot be : the unglorified body is not so agile as the mind.

93. ' What is a reasonable man ? '—One who is controlled in joy and sorrow, him I call a reasonable man.—' How would you define prayer ? '—St Augustine says, prayer is the soul's detachment from things and attachment to God.—' Tell me, Sir, can we be rid of things at once without any trouble ? '—No, it is always accompanied with pain : that indicates the pull of something higher. If it comes without pain it is no matter for rejoicing. True, St Paul lost things all at once, but afterwards he had to conquer them in detail. Conquests made by suffering are lasting.

94. What God has by nature in unity is not denied to any rational creature, by grace, in his individuality. Rejoicing and sorrowing, that is nature. We must expect nature in people.

95. ' Sir, are we punished for faults ? '—We are punished for sins and hindered by faults.—' But you said that when a man has eternal light he never has anything between and now you say he is prone to sin. Do such people sin and is sin punished with fire ? You certainly did say that they have nothing between. How are these two facts to be reconciled ? How is the sin wiped out ? ' —By the perfect love of the creator to his creature and the creature to his creator : the sin lies between them and in the fire of their love sin burns away.

96. ' Those to whom eternal light has come, do they afterwards remain in a state of love and vision ? I am wondering, being established in the one, where there is naught but one, how they manage to be one and other, for there is that in me, when spirit conceives unity, that passes all distinction. Are grace and vision and light all the same ? '—No, not by any means. Take an illustration. The stars are put out by the sun and in the same way

grace and vision fade when eternal light is given. The highest of the angels draws a form from God and on assuming it, adapts it further to himself and informs therewith the middle ones who pass it on to those below and the lowest give it to the soul and the fiend can copy it. So they may be deceived. But the soul in whom the heavenly Father speaks his Word does not receive from the lower angels : what the highest of the angels draws from God he pours into this soul without the intervention of the rest. Verily I say, seldom or never do people get through angels apparitions of such things as are given in time and temporalities.

97. ' What is the difference between nature and spirit ? '—I call that spirit whereby we are aware what we ought to have and what to leave whether we would or no. Spirit makes us do it, willy-nilly. Not to do it because we do not want to would be nature.

98. ' When is nature uppermost ? '—When we have at heart something we ought to get rid of and will not.

99. ' How would you distinguish, Sir, between sin, fault and infirmity ? '—It is sin to cleave with desire to anything that does not make for God. By a fault I mean any accidental falling short of God. And infirmity may be defined as not having the mind fixed on God all the time.

100. ' O thou fathomless Truth,' cries St Paul, ' thy ways are past finding out ! ' When he cries O, he is thinking of the hidden hoard of the divine nature.—' What hoard ? '—The wisdom of God. Angels' and souls' desire is appeased by nothing but the best. The wisdom of God is savoured when all creatures point (us) towards the best. The other hoard is God's art. Art amounts, in temporal things, to singling out the best. True art loses this altogether and abides in the ground of them all. St Paul was caught up above this wonder and above this O and saw the very thing he is seeing to this day, the bond of life meanwhile persisting in his body as form does in its matter. His higher self received naked eternal light ; body was no hindrance, soul received from God.

101. ' When is the soul above O ? '—When she gets the simple impression of divine form, of the image which is the Son himself for so the Father is always letting down the apex of the higher world into the one below.—Anyone on earth may be deceived excepting him in whom the Father bears his Son.

102. ' What is the sign of the eternal birth ? '—While a man is subject to sensible affection he has no conception of eternal truth. When he does conceive the eternal truth no creature can comfort or discomfit him. The time when Paul was felled to earth he heard a voice which said to him, ' Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? ' He said, ' Who art thou Lord ? '—' I am Jesus of Nazareth.'

The voice was not God: God was speaking through an angel. God can no more lose his nature than utter his eternal Word in sound or image. God said through an angel, I am Jesus of Nazareth. He said *I*, referring to the impartible I of divine nature. The *am* shows distinction between the Father and the Son. *Jesus of Nazareth* suggests the union of divine and human nature.

103. St James says, 'With the Father of lights is no turning.' There are three kinds of turning. One of nature, another of will and a third of power. I speak of the first. Turning means changing from one thing to another, becoming more or less, going to and fro. One philosopher says, 'Things are all fighting their way back to naught.' If God withdrew support things would all relapse into primeval chaos. The philosopher says, all created things are fluent. That is fluent which is not stationary in itself. If creature could touch bottom heaven would end and creature would be God. Natural change there is none with the Father of lights. Change is due to a longing for rest. If there were rest in him divine nature would pass away and heaven be at an end. He does not alter. What he has like nature is generation. If generation stopped things would all go back to their primeval nothingness. But of what avail are long discussions of God's nature if we are not aware of his image in us?

104. 'Pray Sir, what makes the soul unchangeable?'—Stability of soul depends upon three things. First on her having her body well-controlled: what the soul wills, that her body must do without question. If Adam had preserved his natural perfection he could have done whatever he desired and creatures would all have been obedient to him. But when he fell both his own body and all creatures left off obeying him: they were no longer true to him who was untrue to God.—The second thing is to have no attachment to or enjoyment in anything inferior to God.—Thirdly, no quarter must be given to the mortal nature. If Adam had stood firm he would not have become mortal. Adam as God made him on the first day would have survived until the day of judgment. St Paul declares, 'From the moment God called me not once have I looked back.' If Adam had seen God in himself he could not have fallen. He knew that God had made him and what he made him for and this he viewed with carnal pleasure. It was this and nothing else that carried him away.

105. When our Lord Jesus Christ was about to depart to heaven to his Father his disciples were with him at the place of his ascension, distraught and unable to speak or pay attention, so much were they engrossed with the bodily presence of our Lord. And while they stood staring up at the sky there came an angel saying, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?'

Why so absorbed in that which, after all, cannot remain with you for ever? Philosophers tell us that creature does not stay, it is flowing all the time back into its source. If the disciples had been proof to sweetness not one of them would have been distraught. For this the angel chid them saying, 'Why stand ye here?' as though to say, why occupy your minds so much with the beloved bodily form of our Lord Jesus Christ? Ye only waste yourselves on temporal things which, after all, are impermanent. 'Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?' God is the form of the soul, the soul's soul. When spirit is caught up above all images, into the eternal truth, then the soul stops and sees into heaven. It is man's highest happiness that she cannot rest until, being rid of images, she is reflected back into the naught where she has been eternally without herself. Soul becomes Son when she is thus transported over all into the open where God is; then soul draws out of God and when she is as we have said she is standing at the door. She loses her own nature drinking out of God, on the threshold of gnosis, where nothing enters into her except the eternal. Eternal rest, then, is not given her except by him.

106. Aristotle says, everything partial is painful; the most united is most painful when divided.

107. Three kinds of people receive God. The first receive him for pleasure. God is sweet to them in anticipation so they entertain him selfishly and to their cost, with little genuine profit. The second receive him of necessity, in discarding sins, for without God they have no power to do it. The third lose desire and desiring naught receive him wisely and with real benefit. The benefit is this: they recognise each fault with rue and in true penitence contrive that he shall find in us the reflection of what we seek in him; thus getting him to dwell in us as we do in him we attain to angelic life: the upward flight, the simple glance into God's nature, and at each ending of the act the steady reflection of God so that in multitudinous things like bodily necessity, she is not debarred from the eternal but in multiplicity is still united.

108. 'Pray Sir, is it possible for mere creature to partake of God's nature?'—No, for as St Augustine argues, God is remote from matter and that which has no matter has no parts and is indivisible. Creature can receive no part of God's nature because God is impartible by nature.—'I do not mean part, Sir, in the sense of fragment; I mean part in the sense of community of spirit with spirit in divine nature. That was my idea in asking.'—You must make allowance for the difference in creatures. One is united, another separated. See how one is united. The will of the Father and the obedience of the Son seized, with the power of their common Spirit, in the bare chamber of the virgin heart of

their chosen vessel Mary, her most pure blood-stream and therefrom, with all his members, wrought one faultless man and poured therein a soul complete with powers and this by the power of the Godhead. When, out of chaos (having brooded there for aye) a shining spiritual soul emerged, straightway all imperfection was removed and by the Spirit itself this soul was admitted to the rank of spirit and, sponsored by the soul, the body was received as well. Such is the mode of union of united creatures.—' And how do separated creatures participate God's nature ? '—St Peter says that creatures according to their natures partake of God in three ways : as being, as life and as grace. As being, creatures all without exception. As life, receptive creatures, from angels and men downwards. Mark how the Father by his generative power created by the propagation of his Word. From his interior Word burst forth their common mind, by nature the one angel of all creatures. Him he commanded to pour his mobile power into the sun and from the solar energy there showered upon earth, increased and multiplied, trees, beasts and all mankind. As regards the soul, the heavenly Father draws up with his power the lower powers of the soul ; the Son lights up the middle ones and the Holy Ghost impinging on the sharpness of her mind, flashes it back to the absolute zero of the Tri-unity. I say to zero : to the boundary line between united and separated creatures. Christ namely, as he was in his first light, bereft of personality which the middle Person of the Trinity preserves therein, where in essential wisdom he is transfixed, confused with God's all-perfection. Further, the soul gets light from God's essential revelation. This is her aught and his causeless incomprehensibility. There her aught abides, graven in a point, mounted in the splendour of his eternal love-nature. In this sense mere creature receives and partakes of the divine nature.

109. ' When do we lose God altogether ? '—How do you mean, lose ? What is your idea in asking this ?—' I mean lose in the sense of knowing God one without other : free from matter and form and exempt from creatures, which are matter and form, one and other. So that creature conveys to her not one whit of God for all they say that God is in all creatures. How is this loss to be accounted for ? '—I answer : Three sorts of people are deprived of God. One in material creatures, another in spiritual substances, the third above creature and below God. In the first case there is loss in creatures of gross material nature. This happens when, her senses being sated with their objective forms, she escapes from their separateness to their perfect whole. Thus she loses the dense part of their nature and there remains to her only the sweetness of their innate nobility. In the second case, since no

caused thing is superior to its cause and the aforesaid sweetness is derived from creatures whereas the soul proceeds from God, like though not of his same nature. therefore the soul being sated, not stinted, with this sweetness will acquire a fresh thirst, for ineffable sweetness, a longing for her first felicity. This finally detaches her from material nature and drives her to pure knowledge of herself and spiritual substances in general. Now she seeks delight in the enjoyments of her kind but finds it not for creatures are all dry and like no better than its like : abiding actuality is the only thing to quench her parching thirst.—In the third case she loses her activity. It happens thus. All spiritual substances act instantaneously though not at any instant of time. Losing instantaneously her materiality she loses each and every use of her separated nature. The thirst is followed by the loss of all variable activities and approach to the outskirts of eternity. Here she awaits the love-light wherein she sees the Trinity. This waiting is personified in Mary, Mary standing without at the sepulchre, waiting in her outward helplessness the embrace of the eternal nature. She saw two angels one at the feet and another at the head. Sight is light-perception. The angel at the head stands for the omnipotence of the majesty of God ; the one at the feet, for his subtile nature. They asked her, ' Whom dost thou seek ? ' For the incomprehensibility of God and her passionate desire-nature would form no satisfying union. The question is one of incapacity for his incomprehensible nature ; she wants to embrace the whole extent of him and is not able to. She said, ' Jesus of Nazareth ! ' He is the keeper in this solitude. Turning, she sees him standing in the likeness of a gardener : in the in-graven nature of the Person imaged in the ground of unity. He questioned her, ' Whom seekest thou ? ' This is the blinding transcendental light, the glory in the midst of the Trinity, which eclipses her own dim understanding and the aforesaid light. " If thou hast borne him hence, tell me,' she says. She has lost her wits in the overwhelming light of the immediate truth. He says, ' Mary ! ' using her own name. When the Father, departing from his essential personality, begets out of himself in otherness of Person his Word, the perfect reproduction of himself, he grasps with his paternal hand his impartible, beatific nature and harking back in spirit to himself is with himself as Son well-nigh in otherness. This is her name of whose child David cries, ' Thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee.' She would have touched him. Now behold and marvel at her love of God ! Not satisfied with rising beyond all creaturely conception she desires to sink into the undifferentiated oneness of the essence of the Three, of God with God, nature with nature, and lose the creature-nature that is hers e'en though that would

not be for her own highest happiness. For in oneness she would lose her knowledge, her love and her enjoyment, in other words, the actual goal of creatures. Hence his warning, 'Touch me not!' for this touching means the refunding into God of separated natures, whereas it is to creatures full of love and feeling that the consciousness of unbroken oneness brings supreme felicity. If she runs into God or God runs into her, either way hers is the loss because of the immensity of his essential nature and the insignificance of her creaturehood. As a dewdrop to the ocean are all creatures as compared with their creator. He bids her 'Go to Galilee to my disciples and tell them of my resurrection; there they shall see me as I said.' Truly a bitter blow! She, who was not satisfied with God in the likeness of the second Person, who wanted to merge into his oneness, and Jesus bids her go to Galilee to bring word of his presence to mere creatures: her, who was impatient of the universal Word in eternal unity! She obeys him and goes thither. To Galilee, submissive to Jesus. Galilee means crossing (or transition). There is no temporal life but has to yield to physical necessity. Her watchword then must be, 'I no longer live but Christ liveth in me.' She came to Jesus' brethren who are three. Uninterrupted union; perfect correspondence with the mirror of eternity, without any discrepancy whatever; complete submission of the soul-powers and loss of all activity in the actual power of God in the essential nature of the body and the soul. Lo, she loses God in the limiting value of creature.

110. Love God with all thy soul.—'What do you mean by loving God with all one's soul?'—Ascending naked to God with nothing between, that I call whole-souled love. The soul's life is love, the soul's love is gnosis and her gnosis is her being. The soul's real being is delight. The soul is never so near to God but God stands one side soul the other. Being belies not itself. Augustine says, God is the soul's soul and being.

114. 'Pray Sir, can one be moved without sinning?'—When the animal passions are stirred the movement comes from without, not from within. Like a tree blown about by the wind and not torn up from the ground because the roots hold. In a case of agitation allowance must be made both for the person and the cause.

115. 'Can one remain the same in good and ill?'—Your bodily nature must always be the sport of joy and sorrow; that it can never lose. But will remains the same in fortune and misfortune, without resentment in the depths of woe. The power of impatience is taken from the recipient of eternal light.

116. 'How do you mean Sir, the power? Pray explain,'—I

am using power here with reference to two things. On the one hand there is loss of the power of resentment. And on the other hand the power to be upset is removed from those who are vouchsafed eternal light. To lose their equanimity would be to them hell-torment and impossible. Joys and sorrows are not grown in the ground of eternal truth ; none of creatures' nurslings are truth's seedlings and that is the key to this matter of dispassion.

117. ' There is another thing that needs explanation. You say that power is withdrawn and they are not able for it. Is this inability of nature or of grace ? '—Nature acts differently. Were it a natural disability then effort would be vain, which it is not. It is an inability of grace ; the soul is caught in the blaze of divine light and held by the majesty of God in the reflection of the essential good of the third Person. There personal distinction disappears merged in the oneness of the Three. There she is lost to the multiplicity of creatures. That answers your inquiries about the loss of power in pious souls and how they are impotent to lose their equanimity. Now, at last, they are omnipotent.

118. ' For the love of God, Sir, expound to me one statement you are fond of making.'—What is that ?—' You say that inability to live up to one's lights shows the absence of eternal light. The man who has eternal light can put his theories into practice. She only has to see a thing and lo, it is as though it had not been and she is free from it, which alarms me somewhat for I am never guilty of the most venial fault but first it is suggested to my mind and this does not prevent me from committing it. Tell me, Sir, what is her essential power ? '—Essential power is one. Her essential power is will-and-love and this is not a prey to images bodily or ghostly, so she is essentially potential and that is what I mean when I call her really free from (passive to) it.

119. ' I crave your counsel, Sir : In the throes of intellectual conception, at the actual moment of it, I would fain be absolutely free.'—It is impossible : gross matter forbids. Soul is volatile by nature, body is made of dense material. That this dense material should be as nimble as the psychic is not to be expected in the unglorified body. To the eye colour, to the ear sound. There is no harm in that nor is it any barrier to eternal truth. We ought to disregard them it is true, but that cannot be. Yet one thing I can tell you for your comfort : no will or love is lost on these disturbers of the peace. Furthermore I say, the power to will and love being absent, her power is what I call essential power. It is a certain test of essence when nothing wrought from without gives any reaction within.

120. In the image-bearing form of God which impartibly contains the form of all things there shines the universal form unformed

in oneness, which radiates one single light into all spirits variously: the highest spirits, as becomes their stable nature, without reflection and souls in this body according to their fitness in this passing time. Mark how this image-bearing light, which the soul receives from its reflection, carries her beyond this mode of changing time into eternity, to the level of the highest spirits. When a mind habitually dwells in its eternal image, God to wit, with more delight than in itself, to such a mind the image-bearing light appears in its eternal form. Then the mind is transported over these manifold and changing things which exist in time and inhabits these rather than itself. Remember, we are dealing here with spirit not with essence.

121. The image-bearing light of divine unity is impartible and yet both essence and nature. Now the question is, how is it essence and how is it nature? The answer is as follows. As essence it subsists in permanent, immanent stillness. It appears as all things in impartible mode; not in the mode of any creature: it is a mode of its own in that same absolute stillness. There the distinctions of the Persons are sublimed to this simple modeless mode. Behold it now the essence of the Persons and of all things: the essence of the Persons it is by nature but of creatures by grace. For consider. It contains the form of all things impartibly, as essence. In this form it is ingrained in all things. This same impartible form (or image) is also nature and as nature it preserves its one-being in the Trinity and the Trinity its one-being in the unity. And as this one-being in the Trinity it is the impartible potentiality of the Trinity: the nature of the Persons but not that of all things. For if it were the nature of all things it would reproduce itself in all the things in manifestation in its own potential nature. Then things would all be God in the same sense that God is God. Now that is not the case. This shows that it is not the nature of all things but only the nature of the Persons and there exists no thing but has its own appropriate nature.

122. Since the impartible image-bearing light behaves as essence and also as its nature, has it then, I ask, the idiosyncrasies of each or not?—No, assuredly not. There is no more than one. Its chief idiosyncrasy is that it is shining by itself and is manifest only to the Persons. But in that this image-bearing light falls upon all things and the only thing that shows it is itself, you see it has the character of light. This character belongs to essential essence and it also belongs to its nature's nature. Here essence and nature are shown to be one being with one idiosyncrasy not two idiosyncrasies; for supposing there were two then one idiosyncrasy would cause the other; which is impossible: the essential stillness behaves as simple essence and nature's radiant Trinity as well.

123. Hence arises the question, in the essence and its nature do things all appear in impartible fashion or no ?—The answer is, Yes, they appear in the essence in immanent stillness and impartible mode: essence and nature one light in light's summit. The essence is light's source and centre. As such it is essence. Also in the Trinity nature shines with the light of all things in the same impartible way. But there is stillness in the depths of essence.

124. But how nature in the Trinity is one and three proceed from one is not to be deduced from the impartibility of the first cause. Augustine says, the Persons are one in nature. Hence nature and Persons are alike eternal. Intellect is by nature perfectly intelligible to itself in the light of nature and its conception of itself is other than this intellect. Intellect is not begotten; it is the paternal Person who begets the knower in perfectly conceiving his own Person. Lo, on a sudden, the eternal birth ! Now there are two Persons and in the very act of the Son's proceeding from the Father, the knower looking back, leaps to the perfect understanding of his Father whence he sprang. In that same origin these two natures know each other with one knowledge. The knowing is the same as the knower himself. Therein they know themselves one love in the omnipotence of the Father whence the knower sprang. This love is their common spiration: in this love they are one. It is the third Person. It starts with the rebirth, the reposing of the knower on the heart of the omnipotent Father. Thus the first river originates the second river, in conjunction with the original source. Hence the several natures are all one in nature and this nature is the same in the several natures. That is to say, Persons.

125. 'But what enjoyment do the Persons get out of their natural essence ?'—Well, as you may prove, the Persons are in their nature and their nature in the Persons: their nature keeps the Persons quite distinct while at the same time preserving them in unity. As preserving them in one, nature is simply the power of the Persons. In this same power the three Persons disappear into their nature. For essence and nature form one light in light's summit, the impartible image of God, essence passing into nature; moreover all the Persons being clapt into their nature vanish into the dim silence of their interior being. There they retain no personality for with this confinement goes entire loss of property. Lo, God de-spirited ! The fathomless deep is fathomed by the mastermind of God. The delight and satisfaction and perfection found therein no nature can describe. That is how the three Persons enjoy their natural essence.

126. 'Tell me, when the spirit runs back into its source, does it remain in its original source or in the naught of its idea ?'—Its

proper habitation is its source. The naked spark of spirit is the *mens*. *Mens* is the natural image of the spirit. But mind is never perfect spirit till it passes into its exemplar and is lost to its own selfhood, escaping in that same natural image into its ideal nature. In this sense its abode is in the naught of its idea rather than in its source. But its origin is its real abode.

127. How is the Son re-born in the Father once he has come forth ?—In this way. The Father grasps the light of his own understanding and bears it into the ground of his essence. Thus the knower is reflected back into the light of his Father's heart.

128. 'I should much like to know, about the appearance of the paternal Person in the unity, where it is all-conceiving.'—When the Father conceiving the impartible idea of all things in the unity, appears to himself in Person and essence, lo, the paternal Person vanishes in this mysterious unity and there is an end of the Father and of all distinctions. Unity conceiving all as one, nothing but one appears and communes with itself. But since logically speaking there is Person in the unity, it is in this unity that it conceives its nature, appearing and calling itself Person and there too the paternal Person must conceive his unity, as the unity the Person, since both of them have the same nature.

129. Mark how conception differs. There is ideal conception and real conception. Ideal conception is the nature's general conception of the Persons, all the three. But the real conception is the special conception of each particular Person in its own proper nature in the nature.

130. 'Tell me, when God conceives the soul does he conceive her by ideal conception or by real conception ? '—He conceives her by ideal conception for this general idea embraces all in one ; supposing he conceived her by particular conception she would be bereft of the flower of her nature for in a particular conception nothing is conceived besides the special nature of the thing itself. In other words, its nature as a unit, an expression, not its innate nobility.

131. Mark the noble lineage of the Persons. They are uncreated and without beginning and infinite and inconceivable and are possessed of property which comes to them in the course of nature. Not so with the soul : she is created and has a beginning and is man and has possessions and not property for to her it is all given.

132. 'Is the seër as free as the will ? '—No, not by any means. If it were it would be always in the naked Godhead. But it is not ; it has to be doing its work, the ordering and management of the various powers. Will has not got this to do : it bids and forbids.

133. ' Now what I want to know is this : why has the Godhead a feminine name and no feminine function and the Person of the Father on the other hand a masculine name and a feminine function ? '—The explanation is this. The Godhead contains all things impartibly and the thing in which another is contained is called mother in virtue of this content. It has, however, no maternal act since it does not as such give birth to anything. The Father, again, has a masculine name and a feminine function and the reason is that the Father in Person does not contain things in him, he begets them out of him by the power of his Person. The Father in his proper personality is empty of the content which he impartibly contains. But also he plays a mother's part, the unity providing him with all that he brings forth. In this bringing forth he is functioning as mother ; as being free from content in his personal nature he retains his masculine name. The birth of the Son shows the Father travailing. But the Father is Father in that he begets.

134. ' Then there is this question : Is the Son born or is he not born or is he still to be born ? '—Let us consider. There are three Persons and that shows the Son is born for each of the Persons has its own peculiar nature. They could none of them have this if the Son had not been born. This proves the Son is born. But the Father changes not at all in his eternal childbirth : could we attribute to him any deed at all it would be in the sense that anything he does he is doing now and what he is doing now he has always done, for with him there is no past nor future. This proves the Son has not been born : he is now this instant being born and this now is an ever-becoming ; as the Father himself says, ' To-day have I begotten thee.' To-day is the eternal now. It is in this now that his birth is taking place.

135. Remember, the eternal Word is both unborn and born. This is a hard saying, but being in the Trinity the Word must needs be born ; it cannot there be called the unborn Word. Taking the eternal Word as Person, it is born ; but take it in its essence and the Word is non-existent. Here the Word has to be born.

136. Now mark how we argue that the Word remains the Word unborn. Where the Word issues from the Father as a birth it shows its born nature and proclaims the Father parent. But where the Word proceeds from the Father as a light it is the species of the Father and shows the Father formless for it has the form of the Father. He himself declared, ' He who seeth me seeth my Father.' Thus the Word reveals the Father in his own form and shows the Father formless and where the Word proceeds from the Father as understanding it proceeds as abiding within.

As intelligence leaves not the heart but reveals to himself the man in whom it dwells, so we have the Word in the eternal procession of the Father, the Word which proceeds from understanding, while understanding itself does not issue forth but abides within. In this procession we have, in the immanent understanding, the Word unborn. This explains what is meant by the unborn Word and how, in the eternal procession, the Word is as it were born of understanding and is still to be born and is this instant being born.

137. One of the masters (Erigena) says: The Father never wrought anything inferior to himself. If this is true, then all the creatures God has ever wrought are God. The question here is, whether the work wrought is as noble as the worker when the worker is God? Let us see. We speak of a working work and a wrought work. The working work is God, the wrought work is not God for it is creature. Hence the explanation. When it is stated that the Father wrought no work inferior to himself that is as good as saying that the Father does one work and one alone in his own Person, to wit, the begetting of his Son in the eternal emanation personal and essential. Only this one work properly belongs to the Father-nature and all other work wrought we attribute not to the Father alone but to the three Persons and one God. But, it may be objected, can the eternal emanation of the Son from the Father be called a work? You can look at it in this way. Everything existing has its appropriate work; the work of fire, for instance, is to heat and so with understanding: it is its work to understand itself. Here the work is not inferior to the worker. And in this sense the Son may very well be called the eternal work of the Father. He brings him forth eternally as Person who yet remains in him in essence.

138. Then there is the question: Was the eternal Word conceived in Mary in Person and essence and was it in the bosom of the Father as Person and essence as well?—In the continuous emanation wherein the Word emanates from the Father as it were from understanding, wherein the Word is now being born, in that same emanation Mary received the eternal Word in a point of time as Person and essence, in its immanence: the Word as flowing from the understanding of the Father. It remained in the bosom of the Father as immanent understanding personal and essential. Thus it came, coming after the manner of a flow and remaining within after the manner of an understanding. Ah, what light and grace enlightened souls obtain from this glorious knowledge!

139. To return to Christ. According to theologists, our Lord Jesus Christ's soul and Lucifer's were made in the same light.

The soul of Jesus Christ our Lord was the very wisest soul that ever was. She turned in the creature to the creator wherefore the Father clothed her in the divine garment and flower of her nature. Lucifer turned to the deficiency and he therefore fell, falling eternally. So fall all they who turn away from God to perishable things.

140. But this light which Christ's soul supernaturally was, this was a creature and our Lord's soul itself being creature too, which of these two creatures then, theologians ask, is the nobler and the higher ?—I was asking one wise doctor about this and he said that in one way the light is nobler but in another Christ. See what this supernatural light means. When Christ's soul was created she was taken from herself and haled above herself into the Tri-unity. Therewith she was united. This was not natural to her, it was all above nature, what befell Christ's soul. What befell was the supernatural light. Herein Christ's soul was omnipotent, in virtue of this happening. Here the supernatural light is nobler than Christ's soul, you can see that for yourselves. The adorner is more noble than the thing that it adorns. Take an illustration. Material is adorned by colour while the colour is displayed by the material, since it has no body of its own. Even so Christ's soul is adorned by this supernatural light and on the other hand Christ's soul makes manifest this supernatural light.

141. Now mark how the soul of Christ is nobler than the supernatural light. The supernatural light having had its effect upon Christ's soul (it happens in a flash), Christ has no more to do with this supernatural light, for the union of divine and human nature to one Person happens instantly and once for all. Here the soul of Christ is nobler than the supernatural light.

142. Then as to souls who have overcome themselves so far as to imagine themselves God. This is due to nothing more than their own natural light : they are withdrawn into themselves till they can see themselves in it as light. You know how a blow in the eye will sometimes make one see stars. By stars in their eyes these souls see themselves. The way the supernatural light reveals the soul to herself is this : the naked spark of the soul, her *mens*, reflects the supernatural light and the pure essence of her spirit seeing itself in this supernatural light fondly imagines itself God. But as you see, it is nothing else than the spirit in the supernatural light, a very great perfection, none the less.

143. Another question is, whether God is (God) by nature or by will ?—He is God not by nature nor by will. If God were God by nature he would be a caused God : nature would have caused him. But that is not the case. And the same with will : were he God by will he would be subject to will and will would

be superior to God. Which is not true either; but he is God naturally, not by nature; he is God willingly and not by will. That is the answer.

144. Again, did God beget himself or did he beget some other? —He did not beget himself nor any other: God the Father is unbegotten God. He begat another and not any other. He begat another, *i.e.* another Person, not something other, *i.e.* another nature: the impartible nature of the Father is also the impartible nature of the Son and of their common Spirit. That is the answer.

145. It is a question among theologians whether the nature is common to the Persons and the Persons common to the nature seeing that each Person contains the whole of nature as its natural being. Does God impart himself to human nature?—Yes.—How can God impart himself to human nature if he is one in essence and distinct in Person?—Each of the Persons has the nature as a whole and the Person of the Son, by assuming human nature, imparted himself to it, the two natures meeting in his Person. Here divine and human natures are in communion. Only the middle Person took on human nature but the three Persons are equally allied with the three powers of the soul.—Are these two natures one or are they united?—They are united and not one. That is one which is in itself without any other and where two meet in one they are united.—How are these two natures united? —They are united by something between so that each one keeps its own nature. The Person which took on human nature is the medium uniting these two natures. Had this Person not assumed man's nature the two natures could not have been united. Neither robs the other of its idiosyncrasy: uncreated nature does not rob created nature of its createdness nor does created nature rob the uncreated of its uncreatedness.—How did the Person take man's nature?—He assumed manhood and not man.—What is the difference between man and manhood?—Man originates with perfect man and is not taken by a Person: it is two natures united in one Person. But manhood is emanating God and man and is taken by the Person of the Son and is divine and human nature and corporal nature united in one person. So much for man and manhood.

146. Did the Person take the manhood of our Lady?—Yes and no. He took the bodily nature of our Lady and the nature of his spirit God produced from naught and poured it into corporal nature; God inspired his spirit and embodied himself in his body. —Is our Lady, soul and body, one person?—Yes.—Did he not take the person of our Lady?—No. The eternal Word of the Father took to itself what was not there already. There was

Person there for the eternal Word is itself a Person. But human nature was not there. Hence the eternal Word assumed a nature not a person : God's nature and man's nature were united in one common form with one Person for Christ does not belie himself. —What brings about this union ?—Grace.—What is grace ?—According to Dionysius, grace is the light of the soul, which lights the understanding of the soul. This light is not God but it is something from God. Just as the sunshine is not the sun but something that comes from the sun so God sheds this light into the soul. In this light man knows and loves and to some extent enjoys in time what beatific spirits know and love and feel in eternal life. But here in time man knows and loves in his own way, dimly : he does not see God face to face as a spirit does in eternal life. Yet the mere feeling of him makes a man able to do all things, to practise all the virtues and in the virtues he grows Godlike and the liker God in virtues the more one he is with God. Thus grace makes for union.

147. There is a further question about the union of divine and human nature : have they both the same essence in the Person they are joined in or have they two essences in this non-potential state ?—One Person can have no more than one essence. So far as the personal nature is Person each nature is its own hypostasis. Where two natures are created in one Person that Person has one essence and that in two natures so far as the two natures are unmingled.—Then we may consider nature as apart from essence in the personal union ?—Yes, it can be seen from another point of view. We find nature in its image unmingled but in the Person two natures are present in one Person as in their hypostasis. So far as both belong to the same Person the Person has one essence and that in two natures. The Persons are eternal, they are in no-wise creature for they have no before or after. Person, that is unity keeping silence albeit big with speech. The Persons are not contained by the unity : they are in unity.

148. There is the question of the worker and the work, whether the work is as noble, as perfect as the worker ? This refers to the Persons of the Trinity. Examine it in this way. The Father is an origin able to originate an origin like unto himself. The Son is such an origin and he together with his Father originates their common Spirit. Here the worker and the work, the effectual work of revelation, are equally perfect. As Dionysius says, ' The first cause causes everything equal to itself.' It was said by one master that the work wrought by God in the patient soul which is all bare of things is nobler than any of the works he has ever wrought in time in heaven or in earth. Just think what this means. The works God has wrought in the angels in heaven

were wrought by the almighty power of God who created them from naught. He was not hindered in this work. In the case of the soul which also he created out of naught, he endowed her with free will nor would God do a single thing without her free will's sanction. But when the soul is passive and cleared of everything in her that might be a hindrance to God's will and turning to God of her own account she gives God the freedom of her noble will as though she had never had free will, enabling God to work in her as freely as when he made all things from naught, then this work has two outstanding features. One is that her free will is no obstacle to God although he is so careful not to override free will: God can work as freely as he will, what he will and when he will and how he will just as if the soul had no free will. The second feature is that God being free in himself his work is freely wrought in what by right of its free will might well object but which does in fact raise no objection. And that is why this is the noblest work God does in heaven or earth in respect of creature. Now you may ask what this work is? It is nothing less than God's revelation of himself to himself in the soul. As sure as he is in himself he himself is in this work. That which is wrought in is turned into that which works there, to the likeness of him, the worker, who has wrought there his like. Here the work which is wrought is as perfect as the worker for it is his living image which is in the work.

149. The soul cannot prepare herself for the reception of God: he who prepares her, him does she receive in preparation. There is a special profit accruing to the soul in the reception of the body of our Lord, which she does not get in any other gift.—'What profit is that?'—Her nature receives its own nature for Jesus Christ's nature is our nature. Nature is received by nature albeit not received pure nature: it is received united with divine nature.

150. Mark how these two natures are united. They are not united nature to nature: they are joined together in one Person, *i.e.* the middle Person. Just as the divine nature is the nature of this Person so is human nature in Christ the Person in the Trinity. For what the eternal Word assumed was humanity not a human person. Had the eternal Word assumed a human person there would be four Persons in the Trinity. But there are not. Jesus Christ's humanity in the eternal Word is the very Person who has ever been the central figure of the Trinity. Therein is not one nature as there is one Person: the natures are of different nature and are united in the Person. Wherefore whoso receives the body of our Lord receives the middle Person and divine nature and Christ's manhood, which is Person in the

eternal Word, and Christ's eternal soul. We receive this all at once in Jesus Christ's body. This we do not do in any other gift in heaven or earth. Let us therefore prize this gift above all other gifts to be gotten here below.

151. When Christ gave his body to his disciples he said, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' But Christ was mortal. Now the question is, did Christ give his body mortal or immortal? According to Hugo of St Victor, every property of his original body of immortality, the whole of these Christ had in him what time he was mortal. So in spite of being mortal he could give his brethren his immortal body; if he had given them his mortal body the eating of it would have outraged them. Bishop Albertus controverts this doctor. I am amazed, he says, that such a great authority should hazard such a foolish statement. Every nature emanates from its appropriate form and Christ's form here was mortal and no immortal property could emanate from his mortal form. If you really want to know how Christ gave his body, mortal and immortal, he gave his body as mortal in itself and immortal in its form and in its effect for its action is divine and he gave it therefore in another form than that of himself. He gave his body as immortal in its work and in its form and mortal in itself for in his mortal body Christ had power to communicate his body immortally as to its effect but not so as to its own nature.

152. It is a question whether in Christ's body there remains aught of what it seems? No, there is seeming without substance and substance without seeming. It seems to be bread but there is really no substance of bread: it is really the body of God without its appearance. So far as its appearance goes it would nourish us like any other food. But if there is really no substance of bread and only the substance of bread feeds the body then how, without the substance of bread, does this nourish the body?—At the consecration of the body of our Lord the bread loses its nature while it retains its form, its mass, its smell and its feeling of bread, so that it does not disappear. Nothing we can taste and feel, nothing, in short, which is apparent to the outward senses, is God's body. The outward senses do not lose what pertains to them. They derive their nourishment from such things as remain. In bread the solid part is all that nourishes. The solidity of the body of Christ is not his body: the solid of the bread remains and that feeds the outward man. This is the explanation of how the sacrament nourishes like any other food. But it really has none of the nature of bread.

153. —When Christ consecrated his body on that Sabbath day and gave it to his disciples, supposing some to have been left and hidden in a bush, would this have died when Christ died on the

cross ?—If the consecrated body had been maltreated by scourging or in any other way, that would not have hurt it. Christ suffered no hurt by eating in the sacrament for he gave his body in another form than that of himself. Christ suffered not at all in the form he gave. But mark. When Christ died upon the cross since there lay under consecration the body of the soul that died upon the cross therefore all the pain Christ suffered in his human form was suffered by his body under consecration. When Christ died to his manhood there died his body dying under consecration, for there was no more than a single body. This death of Christ was the parting of the soul from body ; and since she is impartible therefore wherever she is she is altogether. When she was in the precincts of hell she was not in the body. Neither could she be in his consecrated body. We speak here of two bodies, but there is only one, that which rose from the dead on the third day.

154. Did the consecrated body rise too ?—Oh yes, it rose up glorified for it was the Christ.

155. Then it was questioned, can the soul while in this body get to the point of receiving without means ?—The answer is both no and yes. In the first sense I declare that anything the soul receives must be by light and grace. Light and grace are her means for she is creature. Soul cannot do without these means as long as she is in the body. On the other hand the affirmative reply, that the soul is able to receive direct while in the body, is argued thus. The soul has within her a likeness of the sovran good. In this likeness she receives like. Here like is being received direct by like. Mark how. In receiving thus without means we have to abide by this likeness.—Wherein does this likeness consist ?—Likeness to the sovran good consists in motionlessness of the inner and the outer man : in imperturbability towards all nether things, the outward man not being moved by them nor the inward man disturbed by any mental agitation ; he remains firm and unshaken in the here and now. Be so always.

156. One other question. How have all things been in God ?—In his impartible essence all things subsist impartibly, no one more noble than another. But in the essential Word where all things are distinct one thing is nobler than another.

157. Once the spirit is one with God is it at all enriched by virtues ?—Virtues are products of necessity and necessity enriches not the spirit. It is not virtues that enrich the spirit but the fruit of virtues.

158. It may be asked, are we to take the impartible image of all things as Person or essence ?—There are three distinct Persons but not three images to correspond. We may therefore look at the image in the light of impartible essence. But since essence

in the Persons is possessed impartibly as essence and partibly as speech (one utterance in the Father and another in the Son and another in the Holy Ghost), therefore we may take the image of the Trinity also as a speaking in the Persons as well as simple essence, for the essence is simple in the Persons no less than in its own particular nature.

159. It may be asked, has the one essence no form to correspond with its essential nature ?—That which reveals another is its form. Essence cannot manifest itself in its essential nature : it is manifested by the Persons. Hence the Persons are the form of the essence so far as they reveal it. But Person is one thing, essence is another. Nothing that exists can be without its proper form. If essence exists it must wear its appropriate form. In its own essential form it is manifest to itself as well as to the Persons and none else. But the Persons reveal it to creatures. Here the Persons are its form by the fact of being Persons and making manifest the formless essence. The Persons are the form of the essence inasmuch as they reveal it and in its arcane nature it has its own form latent in itself. This form is none other than the immanent essence itself. Under this essential form the forms of all things are formless for this essential form is the impartible form of all things : this universal form is essential God in its onefold nature and threefold as uttered in the Persons.

160. This is what the spirit clearly sees in a foretaste of delight. The best the spirit can hope for in this body is the perennial feeling of being without all and within all. Without all means in complete detachment, remote from self and things. In all means abiding in perpetual stillness : conscious life in its eternal exemplar wherein the universal image shines in impartibility. There the spirit dwells in all : it has attained to its ideal.

161. Doctors discuss that most abstruse and difficult of questions : What is that which is not caused and which, though neither essence nor yet Person, has might and power in the Father and makes the Father father and the essence essence ?—The answer needs your close attention. Nature cannot be without something whose nature it is and the Person of the Father cannot be without someone whose Person it is. Neither can exist without the other so neither can originate the other. At the same time they have a dual character : speech-silence. Where both alike vanish into their common ground they have the same character ; there speech detracts not from silence neither silence from speech. This lapse into their common ground applies to the eternal and eventful nature. Uneventful nature does not interfere : eventful nature goes on speaking while uneventful nature holds its peace. But this uneventful nature must have an hypostasis, *i.e.* the eternal

and eventful nature which gives power and might to the objective Person. This makes the Father father and the nature nature; not that the Father has an eventful nature: his is the eternal uneventfulness. This let none gainsay in the interests of eternal truth for it is the eternal truth. The ignorant, remember, are given to attacking the eternal verity.

162. St Dionysius says the highest spirits are poured into the lower in succession, and the lowest are poured into the soul. Now the question is, can the soul receive at all without the aid or knowledge of superior angels? I answer. Grant one spirit is more toward than the rest then anything received by the other spirits will be known beforehand to this spirit which is better placed than any of the others. Thus a Seraph is more open to divine inspiration than any single spirit in this life and for two reasons. One is that the angel being pure spirit cannot be poured into the soul. While sharing with the body she has no accommodation for the angel. Secondly, the angel is in the condition of ever beholding the divine light and that is not for any soul in this life. Hence Seraph is more apt to receive God's inspiration and what all spirits receive that spirit knows who is more apt than all the rest. Seraph is not the means of its reception, but, flying as he does nearer to the source of the divine light, it is apparent to him what other spirits are getting of that light. In this sense souls get nothing without the angels knowing.

But let us see, in the working of the soul, if we cannot find some secret way in which enlightened souls receive without the Seraph's knowledge. Well, as you know, the soul animates the members of the body all unbeknownst to those same members. And though life runs so secretly into all the limbs that they are unaware of its mysterious flow, the work of life is none the less carried on in them. The fact is, God instils his life into the soul and into every spirit surreptitiously: no Seraph knows about this stealthy stream of life. Its reception by the soul is a clandestine act. How should Seraph know? He knows nothing of himself or of the soul. That is one thing the soul receives without the higher angels knowing.

The other she receives in the mysterious spark of her own nature, her undivided likeness. But when like meets like there is no mean between them. Like gives like its likeness all unknown to its unlike, in unbroken union. But Seraph is unlike the soul. A Seraph, as you know, is spirit not embodied in any sort of body. But soul is spirit embodied in something of the kind. And secondly to Seraph in his created nature there came all at once and without addition what he this day possesses in his vision of the eternal light; for he is constant in his likeness to God. Here the soul is different from the angels for in the reflection of her like

she receives a secret influx unknown to any angel. It has been said by John, a sage of Greece, that the likeness of the soul consists in perfect likeness to that which has no like. Dionysius calls the angels 'divine minds.' And St Bernard says of those who lead angelic lives while in the flesh that into them there flows the mind of God as it does into the angels. O thou God turned God in thy temporal unified mind, thou spirit inspired into the oneness of God, stand up and do thy crowning work !

You ask how the spirit stands up ? He stands on his two feet, understanding and love, and oversteps all perishable things lest he should foul his feet with matter of corruption.—And what is his crowning work ?—The clear and naked vision of the highest good, God yonder, wherein the highest good shall bathe the spirit in the light of exquisite consciousness. Then shall thou look and see !—Do the light-streams of the highest good affect the spirit ?——When the Sovran Good floods the spirit with light the spirit is borne up above its natural abode.

Meister Eckhart was besought by his good friends, 'Give us one last word before you go.' He said, I will give you a rule which is the sum of all my arguments, the key to the whole theory and practice of the truth.

It very often happens that a thing seems small to us which is of greater moment in God's sight than what looms large in ours. Wherefore it behoves us to take alike from God everything he sends us without ever thinking or looking to see which is greatest or highest or best but following blindly God's lead, that is to say, our own feeling, our strongest dictates, what we are most prompted to do. Then God gives us the most in the least without fail.

People often shirk the least and prevent themselves getting the most in the least. They are wrong. God is everywise, the same in every guise to him who can see him the same. There is much searching of heart as to whether one's promptings come from God or no ; but this we can soon tell for if we find ourselves aware of, privy to, God's will above all when we follow our own impulse, our clearest intimations, then we may take it that they come from God.

Some people make believe to find God as a light or savour ; they may find a light or a savour but that is not to find God. According to one scripture, God shines in the dark where every now and then we may catch a glimpse of him. Where to us God shows least he is often most. So it behoves us to take God the same in every mode and in every thing.

Someone may say, But if I do take God alike in every mode and every thing my mind refuses to abide in that mode or in this one as in that.—Then I say, he is wrong. For finding God in one way rather than another, I allow due credit, but that is not the best. God is everywise, alike in every guise to one who can find him the same. Knowing one guise, such and such, is not knowing God. Finding this or that is not finding God. God is everywise, the same in every guise to one who can see him the same.

Someone may object, But to find God in every mode and in every thing do I not need some special way ?—In whatever way you find God best and are most aware of him that way pursue. Should another way appear quite different from the first you will

do right in quitting that to close with God in this one which appears as in the one forsworn. It is a counsel of perfection in this manner to attain to such a final certainty and peace that we can see God and are able to enjoy him in any guise and in any thing without having to stop and look for him at all: a boon accorded me. For this and to this end all works are wrought and on the whole works help. The things that do not help let us eschew.

We thank thee, heavenly Father, for giving us thy only Son in whom thou givest thine own self and all things. We pray thee, heavenly Father, as thou has given us thy only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and in whom thou dost deny us naught, nor wouldst nor couldst not, hear us in him and make us pure and free from all our many faults, uniting us with him in thee. Amen.

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"In the following translation [of vol. 1] the six last and doubtful sermons have been omitted and a few other numbers of Parts I and II have been replaced by substitutes, either discoveries of Pfeiffer's or from independent sources."—[vol. I] p. xiii.

Vol. II has title: The works of Meister Eckhardt ... volume II, containing, besides the 'lost' Book of Benedictus and Pfeiffer's Tractate XVII, a number of sermons form the Oxford codex entitled 'The para-

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